

Italy's Di Pietro to tie the knot

MILAN, Italy (AP) — At a time when the Italian justice system is under fire for its handling of the Mafia, a top prosecutor is getting married. Antonio Di Pietro, 42, is to wed his fiancée, a 35-year-old woman, on Saturday. Di Pietro is one of the most prominent prosecutors in Italy, known for his role in the investigation of the Mafia. He is also a member of the Italian Parliament. The wedding ceremony is expected to be a private affair.

Charles Diana eligible for 'quickie divorce'

LONDON (AP) — The British royal couple, Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, are reportedly considering a quick divorce. The couple has been married for 15 years but have been separated for a long time. The divorce would be the first for a member of the British royal family. The couple's divorce would be a significant event in British history.

Japan's women may work harder

TEHRAN (AP) — Japanese women may be working harder than ever before. The Japanese government is encouraging women to work longer hours and take on more responsibilities. This is part of a broader effort to increase the productivity of the Japanese workforce. The government is also providing support for women who are working.

Hizbollah guerrillas shell Israeli position

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (AP) — Hizbollah guerrillas shelled an Israeli army position in southern Lebanon on Saturday without causing casualties, security officials said. The attack targeted a position between Markaba and Tallussa in the western sector of Israel's self-declared "security zone." They said, "There were no real casualties but a soldier fainting and was evacuated to Israel by chopper," one official said. The reasons for his passing out were not immediately clear. The Iranian-backed Hizbollah claimed responsibility for the attack. The Israeli army said it was not involved in the attack. The attack was part of a series of clashes between the two sides in the region.

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Majali: No return to past, no justification for Palestinian suspicions

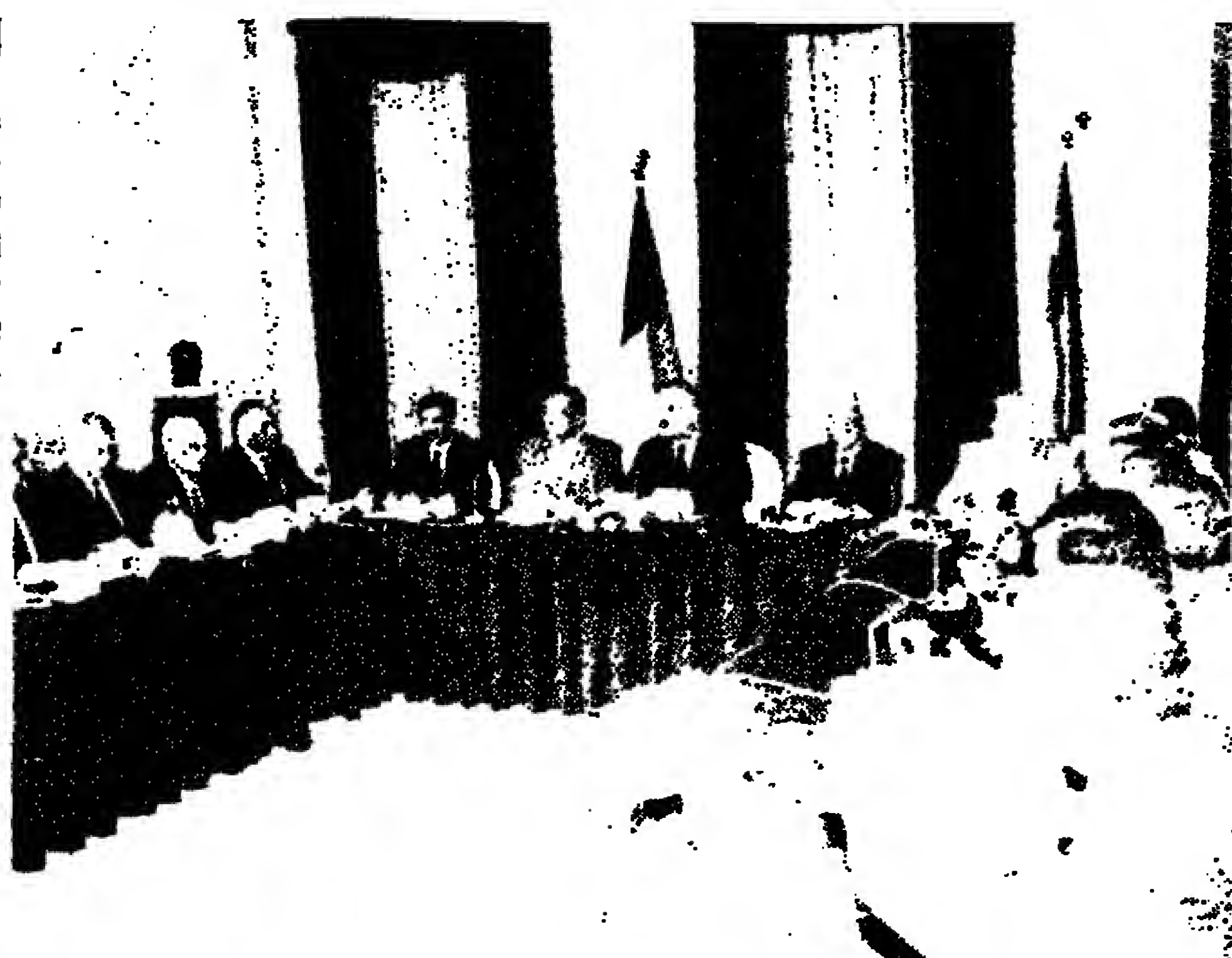
By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The prime minister, Dr. Abdul Salam al-Majali, said yesterday that Jordan had no intention of returning Jordanian-Palestinian relations to what they were before 1967, and there was no justification for Palestinian suspicions that the Kingdom was standing in the way of Palestinian self-determination and statehood. In a keynote address to the seminar on the "Future Jordanian-Palestinian Relations" yesterday, the prime minister said there were crucial outstanding issues that Jordan and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) had to settle between them right away. On the top of these, Dr. Majali said, are the issues of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons, which have to be dealt with before negotiations on the final status can begin with Israel. Economic coordination is another important topic that has to be dealt with, the prime minister said in the address, which was read on his behalf by Senator Kamel Abu Jaber. The new regional order, security, and coordination in the sectoral and employment fields are also topics of common concern that have to be discussed and agreed upon, Dr. Majali added. As far as Jerusalem was concerned, the prime minister said, Jordan had told the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) that it had no right to debate the guardianship of Islamic shrines in that holy city at its forthcom-

ing summit meeting. "With all due respect, this issue does not belong to the OIC summit (...) and administering the holy shrines in East Jerusalem is not negotiable," the prime minister said. The 51 members of the OIC are due to open a two-day summit on Tuesday in Casablanca, Morocco, at which various issues affecting Muslims will be discussed. Dr. Majali repeated Jordan's commitment to managing the Muslim holy sites "until the Palestinian authority has spread to the territory." He hoped a meeting between PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Crown Prince Hassan last week had "settled this issue once and for all." Mr. Hussein said after the meeting that Jordan should stay in control of the sites until the city passes into the hands of the Palestinian authority. "The Jordanians are the trustees of the religious sites and we do not want to make any changes at this stage until the Palestinian authority spreads to Jerusalem," he said. A row had broken out in July when Israel recognised Jordan's historic role in protecting the sites in the Washington Declaration signed between the two countries. But PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who had condemned Israel for the clause in the treaty, was appeased when Jordan said it would hand over control of the sites once talks on the city's final status were to start in 1996 were complete.

Following are major excerpts from the prime minister's speech (Story on seminar on page 12). The primary question for the future is why we should start by defining the framework of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. There are many aspects that make this eventually the best solution, and we may agree to that. But at this point, the Palestinian National Authority is still seeking Palestinian rights over Palestinian land, including sovereignty. If we concentrate more on the Cairo declaration and agreements, much of these accords and procedures are still in need of developing before the Palestinian authority achieves its full institutional structure. Therefore, the main concentration should aim at completing this objective first. To my understanding, the confederation means a centralised leadership for two governments, flags, and national anthem, and by which each party administers its own internal affairs. Until now, this simplified structure of the confederation lacks one of the basic elements, the Palestinian sovereignty over its land, in order to complete the executive, legislative, and judicial structures. It is premature therefore to consider a confederation. And most important, the Palestinian people should have their say on this matter away from any economic, political, or psychological pressure. From previous experience in the Arab World, we have learned

(Continued on page 7)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, yesterday chairs a meeting of committees entrusted with negotiations with the Israeli side (Petra photo)

Regent urges constructive opposition

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said Saturday that the basic challenge facing Jordan was ensuring due respect for the establishment and working towards enhancing it. Addressing a meeting of heads of committees involved in negotiations with Israel on the implementation of the agreements provided for in the peace treaty, the Regent said that in dealing with issues of national interest politicians should transcend isolated personal views and opt for an objective and comprehensive view of the various national issues. We ought to shoulder our full responsibilities towards the nation and we have to relay to the public clear rather than conflicting messages, said Prince Hassan. He emphasised that genuine

opposition should emanate from within state institutions rather than from individuals acting on their own. The Regent urged the committees members to have the initiative in their negotiations with their Israeli counterparts and not to remain only a mere recipient of the other side's initiatives. Stressing that the government would back the negotiators in every respect, the Regent said that the committees ought to give due attention to promoting Jordan's views and ideas regarding regional cooperation. The Regent also stressed the need for the negotiators and the committees to give due attention to the Jordan-Palestinian relationship and its pan-Arab dimension. He said that the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is a lasting one and that Jordan is

committed to extending all support for the Palestinians. Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, who attended the meeting, lauded efforts by His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan in serving national causes, noting that by signing the peace treaty Jordan sought no price but rather the safeguarding of national interests. He called on the media to verify its reports and to place Jordan's interests above all other considerations. Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Sour voiced the House's appreciation of the Regent's endeavours and constant service to the nation. Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, several Cabinet ministers and members of the Senate and some deputies were present at the meeting.

EU: Regional cooperation requires minimum structure

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The four regional parties, Jordan, the Palestinians, Egypt and Israel, need to create a minimum framework within which to cooperate, a European Commission (EC) official said Saturday. "The EU (European Union) is striving very hard to get the four regional parties to create a minimum structure," director of the Mediterranean, Near and Middle East at the European Commission's directorate general for external economic relations Eberhard Rhein said at a press briefing. Dr. Rhein added that there was already an agreement to set up four committees consisting of ministry officials and some private sector representatives to consider the regional infrastructure. Under this banner falls tourism, the establishment of a Middle East development bank and a secretariat. Cooperation within tourism would include provision of training facilities, a publicity programme and joint tour schemes. A Middle East development bank would aim to enhance trade exchange between the four parties, currently at five per cent, while a secretariat, which in the past was run from Brussels, is to be set up in either Cairo or Amman and should be operational by Jan. 1, 1995 and would include a member from each of the four and one Briton, Dr. Rhein said. European awareness of the region has changed in recent years resulting in increased financial assistance, he said. "The EU was never more directly involved in the Mashrag than in the last two years," Dr. Rhein said. In Jordan, he said, the EU had two projects, one of a structural type relating to the balance of payments and the other to finance surveys and studies. The surveys and studies, he

explained, include feasibility and cost of dam and desalination plant construction, regional development of the Gulf of Aqaba, such as connecting airports, ports and industry, and also linkage of electricity grids. "Jordanian links with the EU are part of an overall strategy for design for connecting the countries of the region to one another and with Europe," Dr. Rhein said, adding that part of the EU's effort has been to earmark ECU 5.5 billion worth of grants over the next five years with the same amount to be awarded in loans. Dr. Rhein enthused about the EU Med Partnership meeting in Cairo (Dec. 6-8), describing it as a great success where 10,000 individual businessmen participated in meetings to prepare for the Dec. 13-14 summit in Casablanca, Morocco. He said that Partnerships focused upon small to medium enterprises operating in specific fields, thus complementing the larger economic conferences like that held in Casablanca (Oct. 30-Nov. 1). The Casablanca conference, Dr. Rhein added, drew the attention of the investment and banking community to the region which was "threatened with being marginalised" as a consequence of conflicts and instability and where there is "not enough direct private investment." But he criticised the conference saying that it "judged private and public sector" and said he hoped that the planned follow up conference to be held in Amman next year would be "left to the private sector." Over the next few days a two-day workshop is to be held in Agaba led by the head of the EU-Mediterranean projects division Christian Falkowski (see story on top). Mr. Falkowski said that it will be attended by 25-30 experts.

Jordan urges OIC to seek end to Bosnia embargo

CASABLANCA (Agencies) — Muslim foreign ministers met on Saturday to draw up an agenda for next week's Islamic summit which is expected to call for an end to the arms embargo on Bosnia and set up an emergency fund for Bosnia's Muslims. "Concerning Bosnia, Jordan will ask the summit to urge the world community to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia and hold an international conference on the issue," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal al-Hassan told Reuters. He spoke before foreign ministers of the Jeddah-based Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) started a session to prepare for the Dec. 13-14 summit in Casablanca, Morocco. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Jerusalem would also be high on the agenda of the OIC's seventh summit. "We expect the summit to take serious decisions on many issues especially on Al Quds (Jerusalem) and the (Israeli-occupied) territories. We expect the summit to stand firm on the rights of the Palestinians and that Al Quds Ashraf will remain the capital of Palestine," he told Reuters. "We expect also from the summit to take a decision in the direction of lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia and establishing a fund of emergency to assist Bosnia in its defence requirements," Mr. Zarif added. OIC Secretary-General Hamid al-Gabid urged the foreign ministers' meeting to study the 52-point agenda and "seize the opportunity to better revitalise the concept of Islamic solidarity," in dealing with the issues at stake. "Our insistent demand for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Kashmir, our search for

peace in Afghanistan and Somalia, the struggle of the people of the African Sahel against natural disasters... in short none of our actions, no matter how just and legitimate they are, will be crowned with success without our Islamic solidarity," Mr. Gabid said. Iran also wanted the summit to deal with what Mr. Zarif called the "Western campaign against Islam and discuss all kinds of cultural attacks against our religion," an apparent reference to the French ban on the wearing of scarves by Muslim students. OIC delegates arriving for the summit have called on the organisation, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in Casablanca next week, to redefine its role in a new world order and present the more tolerant face of Islam to a Western world shocked by extremist violence. The crisis of Muslims in Bosnia, under siege by Bosnian Serbs and faced with the possible threat of a withdrawal of U.N. peacekeepers, has provided the OIC's 51 member states with the opportunity to speak with one voice. Bosnia's foreign minister is attending the summit and the OIC leaders were expected to renew an offer to send in more Muslim peacekeepers if the Western powers withdrew their troops with the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia. "Bosnia is the most important issue in this summit. It is our duty to come up with a concrete decision," Afghan Foreign Minister Najibullah Lafrae told Reuters. He added: "The Muslim world is passing a critical crisis... it is time to get together and design a new formula for the future and set up an agenda for the 21st century." Afghanistan and the fighting between rival factions

there is another of the major issues slated for discussion as is the civil war in Somalia, the violence in Kashmir and the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. "Islam... is a message of peace and tolerance addressed to the entire universe," Mr. al-Gabid told the ministers seated in a tent outside a luxury hotel. "Now, however... our Islamic world has fallen prey to all kinds of conflicts, notably in Palestine, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia," he said in a prepared speech given to the press. These troubles were a result of "foreign aggression or deadly confrontations among national factions," he said. The ministers are to review an unprecedented plan to stop the export of fundamentalist violence. It calls for the OIC members to refuse to finance or support "terrorist acts" and to make sure their territory is not used by violent groups to plan or carry out attacks. The draft calls on them "not to host, train, arm, finance or provide facilities" for violent groups, according to a copy of the document. The plan was developed by Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Turkey, who have all seen a sharp increase in the threat from fundamentalism since the last OIC summit was held in Senegal in December 1991. The proposal however distinguished between "terrorist groups" and peoples who had the right to struggle for their liberation. OIC members will also be asked to back a call for an international conference on terrorism, to be sponsored by the United Nations. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who is scheduled to attend the summit on Tuesday and Wednesday, called Saturday on the OIC to fight Islamic militancy.

Christopher: Syria, Israel to resume talks

MIAMI (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Saturday that Israel and Syria would resume direct talks in Washington on making peace. Posing for photographers with Mexican Foreign Minister Jose Angel Gurría, Mr. Christopher gave no date for the resumption of direct talks that broke off 10 months ago. He had previously indicated that the resumption of direct talks between the two parties would mark a significant new development in the peace process that he is directly mediating. But on Saturday, he said nothing dramatically new has happened. "The parties are extremely serious about this. Nothing that has happened in the Middle East has caused them to lose seriousness. Indeed it has deepened their commitment to the process." The secretary of state has just returned from a Middle East trip and was trying to forge an agreement between Israel and Syria that centres on the return of the Golan Heights to Syria which were seized by Israel in the 1967 six-day war. The resumption of talks was described by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as "better than nothing." Mr. Rabin was responding to an announcement Friday by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Sharaa that the two countries would meet in Washington. The announcement was "in essence readiness to start exchange of views, not negotiations," Mr. Rabin said from Oslo. "I believe it's better than nothing," he added, two hours before he was due to receive the Nobel Peace Prize which he shares with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chief Yasser Arafat. "It's a good move, but it's

not all that we wanted," he said. "If they are ready to negotiate one of the most important issues — that is to say security arrangements — between experts — I look at it in a positive way." Mr. Sharaa said from Beirut Friday that Syrian and Israeli ambassadors' delegates to bilateral talks and military officers would hold a meeting in Washington, to be announced soon by the United States. The U.S. State Department confirmed it was to set up the meetings which "should pave the way to a resumption of the bilateral negotiations," suspended since the February 25 massacre of 29 Muslims by a Jewish settler in a Hebron mosque. Mr. Sharaa insisted the talks would be a "public exchange of views and not secret negotiations," which Mr. Rabin has repeatedly urged in order to break the deadlock between the two countries. The main stumbling block is the scale and timetable of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, which it seized from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and later annexed. Meanwhile the European Union's ambassador to Syria, Alan Wadams, said Damascus could join negotiations to the multilateral track of the peace process by mid-1995 if it makes progress with Israel. Mr. Wadams, quoted by the Arabic daily Al Hayat, said the EU asked Mr. Sharaa last month to take part in the talks, which Syria has boycotted since their launch in January 1992. Mr. Sharaa replied that it would take part if Israel pledged to withdraw totally from the Golan, and the two sides could make "substantial progress" in their bilateral negotiations.

Arafat, Rabin, Peres collect Nobel prize

OSLO (APF) — PLO leader Yasser Arafat and his former Israeli foes, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, collected the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize on Saturday in recognition of their historic self-rule deal. Mr. Arafat, in a gesture of humility for his greatest moment of glory on the world stage, bowed several times after receiving the award. But he broke into smiles when Foreign Minister Peres and Prime Minister Rabin, whom he shook hands several times, followed him to the rostrum in alphabetical order. In contrast to the applause during the two-hour ceremony around 100 policemen and women were put on the streets to prevent Jewish demonstrators from disrupting the event. The three laureates received the diplomas and medals from the chairman of the Nobel committee, Francis Sejersted, amid the marble and frescoes of Oslo's town hall before an invited audience of 1,000 people, including King Harald V of Norway. They also share the seven-million kroner (\$950,000) prize. Mr. Arafat urged Israel in his acceptance speech to speed up the peace process with an army redeployment on the occupied West Bank and elections for a Palestinian autonomy council. "I call upon my partners in peace to reinforce the peace process with a more comprehensive and strategic vision and accelerate the peace process," the 65-year-old Palestinian leader said as he collected the world's most prestigious peace prize being shared by three people for the first time. Mr. Rabin, 72, vowed never to abandon the Middle East peace process despite the killings aimed at wrecking the search for an overall settlement. "We are determined to do the job well — despite the

toll of murderous terrorism, despite fanatic and cruel enemies of peace," he said. The autonomy deal, signed in September 1993 after secret talks in the Norwegian capital, was launched in Gaza and Jericho in May. But the next phase has been stalled by Israeli fears of attacks on Jewish settlements in the West Bank by Muslim opponents of the peace process. Mr. Peres, 71, one of the architects of the autonomy deal, outlined his vision of a new Israel living in harmony rather than conflict in a Middle East of cooperation and dialogue, with peace as the "no-choice option." In reply to critics of the award as Israeli-Palestinian violence continues, Mr. Sejersted said that "our laureates have not only shown that a road to reconciliation can be found, but also very bravely taken several steps down that road." Policemen on horseback and anti-riot units with dogs kept at bay small groups of Jewish demonstrators on the route to the town hall, on a square which was cordoned off. A group of around 30 Israeli settlers on the streets shouted "Arafat, terrorist" and brandished placards which said, "It's not peace. It's terror." As the laureates' motorcades passed by, one demonstrator rushed into the middle of the street but was swiftly shoved out of the way by a white-helmeted policeman. "I have come to watch every year, since I was a small child, but I've never seen anything like this," said a student, Ragnhild Helgveit. "It's supposed to be a peace thing but this is bad harmony with the helicopter over our heads and all these police on the streets," said fellow onlooker Olav Mysterud, a 51-year-old teacher.

Arab League urges OIC summit to take action on Bosnia, Libya

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League Friday urged Muslim leaders at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Morocco to take action to help Bosnia Muslims and Libya.

Adnan Omran, deputy secretary general of the Arab League, said the OIC must "assume its responsibilities" in the face of the massacre of the Muslim people in Bosnia.

"After the failure of the European Union and the United Nations to contain the conflict, Islamic states must act to help the Bosnian people and must not stop at simply making speeches," he added.

Omran was speaking before he set off for the Moroccan city of Casablanca, where the two-day OIC summit opens Tuesday.

He said representatives from the OIC's 51 members would also discuss the "injust" international sanctions on Libya in April 1992.

The U.N. Security Council imposed an air and arms embargo to force Libya to hand over to Britain or the United States two suspects in the December 1988 airliner bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

Sanctions were broadened in 1993 to a freeze on some Libyan assets abroad and a ban on some oil-related

equipment.

Omran also condemned Israel's insistence that Jerusalem was its eternal and undivided capital, and said the Holy City was "Arab territory, the eternal capital of the Palestinians."

The dispute over Jerusalem and the Arab-Israeli peace process would also be discussed at Casablanca, he said.

He urged Muslim states to "adopt a position on the continuation of Israel's nuclear armament, which is a large obstacle on the path to peace" in the Middle East, and to refuse to sign an extension to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty until Israel signs the accord.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa also left Cairo Friday to attend a meeting of OIC foreign ministers the following day.

The Foreign Ministry said it was not yet decided whether President Hosni Mubarak would attend the summit.

Iraq urges OIC to break embargo

In Baghdad meanwhile, Iraq Saturday urged the OIC to break the international sanctions imposed more than four years ago and which have crippled its economy.

A senior Iraqi official called on the OIC two-day summit "not to be satisfied with a resolution calling for the sanctions to be lifted."

Saad Kassem Hammudi, a member of the foreign affairs commission in the ruling Baath Party, told the daily Babel. "We have to start immediately and break the economic embargo, unfreeze Iraqi assets and cooperate fully with Baghdad in all spheres."

Babel is run by Uday Hussein, son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Iraq when it invaded neighbouring Kuwait in August 1990, and several countries have frozen Iraqi assets within their territory.

In November, the U.N. renewed the sanctions even though Iraq formally recognised the sovereignty and borders of Kuwait. One of the key U.N. demands for lifting the embargo.

Iraq Vice-President Tariq Aziz announced earlier this month that Baghdad would take part in the Casablanca summit of the 51-member OIC, but there has been no information on the make-up of the Iraqi delegation.

Baghdad boycotted the last summit in December 1991 less than a year after the Gulf war.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (right) attending dinner together in Oslo's Grand Hotel. The three leaders were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize Dec. 10 (AFP photo) away during a photo session on Friday before

Israel should pursue peace with caution, says Kissinger

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger advised Israeli leaders receiving the Nobel Peace Prize Saturday to be cautious in talks with Syria and the Palestinians.

Dr. Kissinger, himself a 1973 Nobel Peace Prize laureate for efforts to end the Vietnam War, said in an interview on Israeli Radio that he was uneasy with the decision to also award the prize to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"I would have felt more comfortable if it had been given after a long enough period to see that he had really changed and his prize will be justified," Dr. Kissinger said.

The Nobel committee was criticised by some who still see Arafat as a terrorist and led to the resignation of committee member Kare Kristiansen, who was in Israel Saturday to be honoured by a right-wing group.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who received the Nobel along with Mr. Arafat in Oslo Saturday, should pursue talks "with caution and discipline," Dr. Kissinger said.

Israel and the PLO are negotiating expanding the seven-month Gaza-Jericho autonomy to the West Bank. But after a wave of Islamic attacks on Israelis and recent clashes between fundamentalists and PLO troops in Gaza, there are calls to reconsider Israel's commitment to withdraw troops

from West Bank towns before planned Palestinian elections.

"Arafat has an obligation to make sure these events in Gaza are brought under control because they cannot possibly be repeated on the West Bank," Dr. Kissinger said.

"My view would be to do (the West Bank redeployment) one step at a time and to try it out in one town first and see what happens... It's too dangerous to do it on a general basis. Israel cannot commit suicide for the sake of clauses in an agreement," he said.

Dr. Kissinger, who as

secretary of state brokered a separation of forces agreement between Israel and Syria in the 1970s, said he didn't believe there was any point in intensifying the current U.S. mediation of Israeli-Syrian peace talks.

"I don't see the conditions for it now," Dr. Kissinger said.

Asked whether Israel should meet Syria's demand of a total withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights which it captured in 1967, Dr. Kissinger said only: "I would not make an agreement that depends entirely on an assumption of permanent good will."

Kuwait to sign GCC pact

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said Saturday it planned to join soon a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) security pact signed by the four other members of the six-nation organisation.

The interior minister (Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah) affirmed Kuwait's commitment to the security pact and its keenness to implement its clauses, "an official statement said."

Sheikh Ali noted that one clause in the pact, which aims to coordinate measures against crime, required more time for study before signing could go ahead at the "soonest opportunity," said a statement.

Kuwait did not join the security pact when it was ratified by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab

Emirates and Oman during a GCC interior ministers' meeting in Riyadh last month.

GCC member Qatar boycotted that meeting to protest against what it said were incidents along its border with Saudi Arabia.

At the time, Sheikh Ali told reporters Kuwait did not sign the pact because of "legislative" issues.

A Kuwaiti official in November said Kuwait could not join the pact due to contradictions with the Emirate's constitution.

He said the pact, details of which have not been published, obliges members to extradite suspects. Kuwait's constitution states that: "No Kuwaiti may be deported from Kuwait or prevented from returning thereto."

Oslo brokers reunite

OSLO, Norway (AP) — At a back table in the Palm Garden bar, the old friends of the Oslo channel swapped laughs and tales late Friday about their secret talks on Middle East peace.

The Norwegian, Palestinian and Israeli merchants of peace were back for a well-deserved reward: Watching Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat receive the Nobel Peace Prize on Saturday.

Without the efforts of the tightknit team gathered at the bar in Oslo's Grand Hotel, there might never have been a peace accord to honour.

Those at the reunion included Terje Rød Larsen and his wife Mona Juul, two Norwegians who spotted the chance to open a back-door channel between bitter enemies Israel and the PLO — while on a trip in the Gaza Strip.

With them, smiling, relaxed and joking, was Yossi Beilin, the Israeli deputy foreign minister who helped open the channel.

"This year this is front channel, the back channel is over there," Mr. Beilin said, with the secretive team for once within earshot of journalists.

There was Israeli negotiator Uri Savir and the PLO's Ahmad Qureia, usually called Abu Ala, who both stole in and out of Norway

more than a dozen times for secret meetings that led to the agreement on Palestinian self-rule, signed in September 1993.

Although there is much work left on the accord, and much blood has been spilled since it was signed, the people of the Oslo channel were in high spirits when they met again.

"We didn't believe a year ago that it would be possible to implement the agreement in the way it was implemented. We envisioned the problems, the violence but we couldn't believe that such a day could come so soon that the whole world would acknowledge the importance," said Mr. Beilin.

Abu Ala said teasingly three things that were best about his many treks to Oslo: "Nice food, the great Mona and the less great Terje."

Mr. Larsen, now U.N. undersecretary for the Middle East, said Mr. Arafat often made a similar observation.

"The chairman always says there are two Larsens: The ugly one — that is me — and the beautiful one — that is Mona," Mr. Larsen, 47, said about his attractive 34-year-old wife, now a diplomat stationed in the Middle East.

"On this," joked Israeli negotiator Savir, "There is Palestinian and Israeli consensus."

Arafat's ex-wife emerges, wants to return to him

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The day after Yasser Arafat's wife announced they were expecting a baby, an Israeli newspaper on Friday published a lengthy interview with a woman who claimed to be his first wife.

"I am the only one who really understood him. I knew what he was thinking and what made him happy, what was food for him and how to relax him. I understood him completely," Najla Yassin, was quoted as telling the daily Haaretz.

Ms. Yassin, known as Um-Nasser, managed his Tams office and said she and Mr. Arafat lived together for 18 years until 1985. The couple had no children.

Interviewed in an opulent villa in Tunis, Ms. Yassin proudly showed off photos of her and Mr. Arafat, including one of them cutting what appears to be a wedding cake. The 65ish, heavily jeweled woman often burst into tears during the exclusive interview with Haaretz reporter Suha Gharaf.

Born in Syria to a Lebanese family, she was one of the first women to join Fateh, the mainstream PLO organisation. She said she later divorced her Palestinian husband to be with Mr. Arafat, known by his guerrilla name Abu Ammar, in 1967.

"We lived together for many years. He took care of me and loved me very much," Ms. Yassin said. "He was a good man, a sensitive and gentle man."

"When I saw that he was anxious or tired I would go out to the streets and find a Palestinian child and tell him, 'Go to Abu Ammar, he wants to give you a Klashnikov (rifle) so you can fight the Jews,'" she said.

"The child would go in and ask Abu Ammar for a Klashnikov. He would immediately forget all of his troubles, smile, kiss the child and say 'do you see these? They are our boys,'" Ms. Yassin said.

Mr. Arafat, 65, had been given to explaining his bachelorhood over the years by



Suha Arafat

saying he was "married to a woman called Palestine." But there have been rumours for years that Mr. Arafat had promised marriage to a number of women.

Mr. Arafat's 1991 marriage to Suha, his 31-year-old present wife, was kept secret for 15 months.

Unnamed PLO officials confirmed to Haaretz that Mr. Arafat had indeed been married before and it was Ms. Yassin.

However, in Gaza City, Mr. Arafat's office Friday denied any knowledge of the woman and refused to comment on the report.

Mr. Yassin told Haaretz that she is waiting for Mr. Arafat to call her to Gaza and that she has been ordered to stay away until he does. Asked why she doesn't go ahead without a summons, she said: "I can't just do it. He would get very angry."

Shortly after the interview, Ms. Yassin left Tunis for good and moved to Egypt. In a subsequent telephone interview 10 days after the first, Ms. Yassin emphatically denied she had ever married Mr. Arafat and asked to retract the story.

A senior unnamed PLO official in Tunis told Haaretz that Mr. Arafat had bestowed great wealth upon Ms. Yassin but had ultimately left her.

"The jewels that she has are enough to build all Gaza anew. Arafat banished her, but she still dreams of returning to him. In my opinion she doesn't have a chance," the official was quoted as saying.

Lebanese intellectuals slam corrupt politicians

BEIRUT (R) — A group of intellectuals said on Saturday Lebanon was becoming a land of degenerating politics and "get-rich-quick business, bribery and speculation."

Lebanon needed a new political class dedicated to serving the public interest, they said in a public appeal.

"The rule of get-rich-quick business, bribery and speculation is to be condemned as much as the reign of (civil war) militias, drugs and rackets," the 55 intellectuals said.

Calling for an investigation into a widening series of scandals, they said corruption must be eliminated by raising political standards to consolidate democracy.

The group of professors, journalists, artists and professionals said political life was suffering a distressing deterioration that threatened the rebuilding of democracy after the 1975-90 war.

They expressed concern

that corruption charges were being lodged by people with mafia-like links to those they accused.

"Are not those who denounce scandals today the same who covered them up yesterday?" the appeal said.

A parliamentary deputy charged with drug dealing shook the political establishment last month by linking a son of President Elias Hrawi, unnamed deputies, an unnamed businessman and 10 airline pilots with drugs.

Another deputy said members of the previous parliament and politicians were bribed to pass a 1991 law setting up the Solidere company that is rebuilding Beirut.

He named two aides of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, mastermind of the Solidere project, as alleged distributors of bribes.

Cold leaves Iranians without heating

TEHRAN (AFP) — Hundreds of homes have been without gas and heating for several days in northern Tehran as distributors struggled to meet a rush in demand caused by a sudden cold snap.

Temperatures have plummeted to below zero in the past week creating a huge demand for gas.

The Iranian gas company has urged the population to "economise on gas to allow everyone to get a supply."

Thousands of flats and houses are heated with gas which has been swiftly developed as a source of energy by the Iranian authorities.

The northern residential areas of the capital have been the worst hit.

Relief convoys give ray of hope to embattled Kabul

KABUL (R) — Three relief convoys have reached besieged Kabul this month, providing a small ray of hope for the people of the Afghan capital struggling to survive cold, hunger and random rockets.

Two U.N. convoys brought 1,500 tonnes of flour, as well as medical and shelter supplies last week, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) trucked in medical goods.

"It's a drop in the bucket," said Martin Barber, who coordinates U.N. humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. "If we could do 1,500 tonnes of food a week, it would make a big difference in getting the people of Kabul through the winter."

Factional battles have killed about 15,000 people in Kabul since the communist government fell to Islamic guerrillas in April 1992. Thousands more have been

wounded or forced from their homes by fighting that has wrecked entire neighbourhoods.

"We came here in January after our homes in the old city were destroyed," said Khair Mohammad, speaking for 30 families living cheek by jowl in a small concrete mosque in the government-held northwestern district of Khair Khana.

"The foreign agencies helped us a bit at first, but not now," said the former carpet dealer. "Our women go to the city to beg. Lots of us have borrowed money from shopkeepers."

The 400 people in the unheated Khawaja Abdullah Ansari mosque are living three or four families to a room, crudely partitioned with sacking and cloth hung from ropes.

"We have even sold the blankets given us by a foreign agency because we had no-

thing to eat," said Abdul Shakoor.

Coughing children huddle under piles of bedding on the floor or play in the muddy courtyard outside as their parents bitterly recount how they are no longer wanted in the neighbourhood.

"Local people come here and threaten to bring the police to evict us. They say we are not good Muslims and our children are disturbing them, but we have nowhere to go," one woman said.

Others said 25 families had been forced to leave at gunpoint three months ago for alternative accommodation in a school.

The mullah, Maulvi Mohammad Hussein, said local people had helped the displaced families at first but now felt it was improper for women and children to stay in the mosque.

"They say they will not come to the mosque as long

as these people are here," he said. "Now the security people have found another place for them and soon they will leave."

Ariane Curdy, an ICRC nutritionist surveying the needs of Kabul's citizens, said that, apart from displaced people living in public buildings, about two-thirds of 370 families visited in private houses were not living in their own homes.

"The picture is of a town largely depleted of its original residents," she said. Nutrition levels among those in private houses were little better than those in public buildings.

"We are finding that about two-thirds of the girls are malnourished, compared to one-third of the boys," she said.

"The fact that we couldn't bring in food until now means people have had to sell all their belongings," Curdy

added. "The international community has failed to prevent that."

The United Nations, whose convoys were the organisation's first since June, is using local and international agencies to distribute food and other supplies to those thought most in need, but so far there is just not enough to go round.

At a newly opened bakery supplied by the U.N. World Food Programme in the opposition-controlled village of Bagrami near Kabul, 500 families can buy subsidised bread using coupons.

"We have coupons, but we still can't buy bread because we have no money," complained one of a group of veiled women to visiting U.N. officials.

"We don't have any money and we don't have coupons either," came a retort from the crowd.

Barber said food prices

could be brought down if warring factions continued to let supplies flow into the city.

"If we can open the roads and make convoys a regular feature of life in Kabul, the price of these commodities will come down, the economy will improve and everyone will benefit," he said.

Opposition leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces have blocked roads to Kabul for much of this year in a power struggle with his arch-foe, President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

"We want all the roads to be opened and a permanent ceasefire announced," Mr. Hekmatyar told Reuters last week.

Asked if that meant the blockade was over, he said: "We are serious about a peaceful solution, but it's not the case for the other side. They just want to remain in power."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:00	Polliards
17:30	Un Four Tous
18:00	Montage
18:30	Les Intepides
19:00	News in French
19:15	Ushula
19:30	McHale's Navy
20:00	The Phantom Horsemen
20:30	Quantum Leap
21:00	Galactica
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film "God Father" (Part II)
23:59	The Upper Hand
PRAYER TIMES	
04:58	Fajr
06:20	(Sunrise) Duhr
14:14	Duhr
16:37	Maghrab
17:59	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Sweifiah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624591	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	

TERRASANTA Church Tel: 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851	Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824529	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 641935	
St. Lazarus Church Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Unstable weather conditions will prevail, thin skies will be cloudy with a chance of scattered showers in the northern and eastern parts of the country. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min/Max temp.	0/12
Amman	7/19
Deserts	-1/14

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Jamil Maraga	776149
Dr. Nidal Asad	751672
Dr. Khalid Mursadi	743504
Dr. Ghazi Abdullah	884286
Firas pharmacy	661912
Fordows pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Naioukh pharmacy	636772
Al Salam pharmacy	636750
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Naioukh pharmacy	636772
Najih pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Ali Shogairi	246140
Akuds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Raith Atallah	884424

TIMES DAILY	
Khalil pharmacy	965417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Police - Emergency Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Police - Traffic	965411
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	773121
Police - Traffic	965402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	800321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	011020
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Addenda Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	661100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	
Company	663641
RJ Piggy Information	98-5520

rs reunite

more than a dozen times for secret meetings that led to the agreement on Palestinian self-rule, signed in September 1993.

Although there is much work left on the record, and much blood has been spilled since it was signed, the people of the "old channel" were in high spirits when they met again.

We didn't know a year ago that it would be possible to implement the agreement in this way. It was implemented. We envisioned the problems, the violence but we couldn't believe that such a day could come so soon that the whole world would acknowledge the importance," said Mr. Helin.

Mr. Helin said that the three things that were best about the many talks were: "Nice to see the great King and the great Queen," said Mr. Helin.

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Civil Defence Rescue units Saturday evening haul a metal cutter through the rubble of a building which collapsed in the Nazal suburb of Amman (Photo by Rana Hussein)

New building collapses 2 hours after completion

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Civil Defence Department (CDD) rescue units discontinued their search Saturday night for two people who were believed to have been trapped under rubble after a newly-constructed building collapsed in Nazal suburb.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that the two Egyptian workers who were feared missing and possibly trapped under the wreckage of the five-story apartment building, appeared at the scene. Both workers were reported not to have been on the site when the building collapsed, the official added.

"The two men showed up two hours later and said they were away at the time of the collapse, but we will continue to dig in the rubble just in case someone else was in the building," the CDD official said.

An eyewitness who lives near the site said that at approximately 4:00 p.m., he saw stones falling from the building, then "all of a sudden the building just went down."

"I was standing on my balcony at the time of the incident, and my house started shaking, accompanied by loud noises," the witness told the Jordan Times.

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi said that the building was licensed by the Jordan Engineers Association.

Princess Basma to serve on WHO global commission on women's health

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday agreed to join the Global Commission on Women's Health of the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the period 1994-95.

Princess Basma, in a written reply to WHO Director General Hiroshi Nakajima, expressed her appreciation to the organisation for selecting her to serve on the committee, stressing that she will do her utmost to achieve the committee's objectives.

The Princess last month received a letter from Dr. Nakajima inviting her to accept membership on the committee, whose establishment was recommended by WHO member states at the 45th World Health Assembly in 1992.

The Global Commission on Women's Health comprises prominent personalities from a broad range of disciplines and experiences, including political, scientific and professional leaders throughout the world.

The terms of reference of the commission involve pro-

ducing an agenda for action on women's health, acquainting policy makers with women's health issues, advocating the promotion of women's health issues within all development plans and using all forms of mass media to achieve that end.

They also involve providing a forum for consultation and dialogue with women's organisations and women's health advocacy groups.

The commission meets approximately twice a year to provide independent scientific and technical advice on policies and strategies relating to women's health.

Its next meeting will take place in Australia at the beginning of April, 1995.

Princess Basma's selection to the commission's membership reflects WHO's appreciation of her role in supporting women's causes.

With this new appointment Princess Basma now serves four U.N. assignments.

In May 1993, the Princess was appointed as Honorary Human Development Ambassador by the U.N. Development Programme.

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Ministers report on talks with top financial entities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday heard reports from Minister of Planning Hisham Khatib and Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh on the outcome of their negotiations with the European Union (EU), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to the reports, the European Union has agreed to give Jordan an immediate grant of \$36 million to be transferred to the Jordanian treasury before the end of the year to help Jordan's balance of payments.

The grant came as an initial response from the EU to the efforts and meetings conducted lately between EU leaders in Brussels and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

The reports said the IMF board has endorsed a \$57 million loan to the Kingdom in addition to an earlier sum, thus bringing the total of the IMF loan to \$110 million.

This will be a long term, low interest, soft loan and will be available during 1995, according to the reports.

In addition, the World Bank has approved a low-

interest \$80 million loan to Jordan payable over 20 years, said the reports, which added that the German government has agreed to offer Jordan a \$40 million low interest loan payable over 20 years through the World Bank.

Over and above this, Jordan will obtain a \$50 million loan from the German government during this year, the reports added.

Dr. Khatib and Mr. Gammoh told the Council of Ministers that these soft loans were designed to augment the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves cover the 1995 budget deficit and enable the government to carry out capital projects next year.

Meeting under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, the Cabinet approved 18 projects which pledge to invest JD80 million in businesses that would create 2,000 jobs.

The Cabinet said that the schemes would be considered certified economic projects which are entitled to benefit from numerous incentives such as exemptions from customs duty on imported

machinery and equipment and exemptions from payment of income tax for the first two years of production.

A Cabinet statement said that the new schemes would manufacture plastic materials, spare parts for machinery, containers and bottles for drugs and foodstuffs, aluminium, iron, ready-made garments, underwear, textiles vitamins, dairy products, veterinary drugs and detergents and some would provide medical and hotel management services requirements.

The Cabinet Saturday also approved the establishment of six enterprises, considered



Sami Gammoh

economic category projects, which are allowed fewer exemptions than certified economic projects.

These businesses would manufacture chocolates, biscuits, cartoon and documentary films, educational materials and textiles. The total funds to be invested are JD4 million; 270 jobs are to be created by these schemes, said the Cabinet statement.

The Council of Ministers endorsed a memorandum of understanding with Germany providing for DM 1.5 million (JD669,000) from the German government to finance the cost of expertise and tech-



Hisham Al Khatib

nical assistance in assessing the Kingdom's various needs in different fields.

The Council of Ministers also agreed to exempt the Military Consumer Corporation from JD7 million in customs duty that would have been collected on the corporation's imports next year.

The Cabinet also approved Jordan's participation in the 12th conference of the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ALESCO) due to be held in Tunis between Dec. 17 and 20. The Jordanian delegation to that meeting will be led by Minister of Higher Education Rateb Saoud.

It also decided to form a Jordanian delegation, led by Interior Minister Saleh Hamad to take part in the Arab League interior ministers' council meeting scheduled to be held in Tunis between Jan. 4 and 6.

It approved Jordan's participation in an international tourism exhibition to be held in Milan, Italy, early next year and the Berlin International Tourism Fair in March

1995. Jordan's delegation to the two exhibitions will be led by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan.

According to the Cabinet, Judge Adib Jalandeh, the prosecutor general, and Judge Mashour Kouj, member of the Court of Appeals, will be sent to the United States to discuss an agreement on the extradition of crime suspects between Jordan and the United States. No date was given for their trip.

The Council of Ministers delegated the secretary general of the Ministry of Planning to travel to Paris to negotiate a financial protocol for 1994 with the French government. The secretary general was authorised to sign the protocol.

The Cabinet also approved Jordan's participation in the general assembly meeting of the Federation of Arab News Agencies to be held in Beirut on Dec. 14 and 15. Jordan will be represented at the next meeting by Abdullah Etoum, director general of the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

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Enumerators start 1994 census 125,000 families to be visited daily

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Eight thousand enumerators commenced with a house-to-house survey of the Kingdom yesterday, thus initiating Jordan's fourth national census.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Assistant Director General of the Department of Statistics Ismail Abu Soudos as saying that the researchers will visit approximately 125,000 families daily out of an estimated 625,000 families in Jordan.

Last night, enumerators visited group families (those staying in hotels, hospitals or homes for the disabled) and also surveyed those entering the Kingdom at the airport. All visitors who arrived in Jordan before midnight Saturday were registered in the census. Last night was also the night that residents were supposed to have recorded the number of people sleeping in their homes.

According to a statistics department official, the census will count foreigners living in Jordan as well as

Jordanians living abroad for less than a year (for example, those travelling or studying abroad or those travelling on business).

Although plans for the census have been under way since 1991, some have criticised the census as being politically motivated given the recent political developments in Jordan.

Critics say that the census seeks to define the number of refugees in the Kingdom in order to seek compensation in the peace talks, or may determine the number of Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin — a controversial issue that has been generally avoided since the signing of the peace treaty with Israel.

But, according to Abdulrahman Al-Zoubi, executive director of the 1994 census, the only objective of the census is to establish the number of inhabitants in each governorate so as to facilitate policy-making and planning.

"It is only natural that the government should want such statistics," he said. "The government has

to study migration trends, which is important in a place like Jordan where the population has increased significantly over short periods of time."

Jordan, in fact, has one of the highest population growth rates in the world, much of which is a result of an influx of refugees and displaced persons during the last five decades.

The Kingdom's last national census was in 1979, showing a population of nearly 2,150,000. Today, however, the population is estimated at just over 4 million — ten per cent of which are figured to be returnees from the Gulf states following the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Information and results of the census will be valuable to several ministries: education, labour, planning, social development and others.

The census will also help planners and sociologists study fertility and mortality rates by governorate, as well as other demographic information such as the status of handicapped and disabled people.

Referring to the work of Amnesty International, he said that the London-based group, which was established in 1961, now comprises 1.2 million members in 41 countries. He said they conduct their work without political bias.

Adding that AI groups continue to face harassment in some Arab states, Mr. Abu Baker said that Jordan was an exception because here, Amnesty International receives all the facilities and help it needs for its work.

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Government urges JPRC to provide more gas cylinders

Ministry reviews gas storage safety measures

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government Saturday urged the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) to increase its daily provisions of gas cylinders from 300 to 500.

The decision, taken at a meeting chaired by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Talal Ureikat, came less than 24 hours after an explosion at a gas storage facility near the Sports City neighbourhood destroyed about 1000 gas cylinders.

The government also passed several measures concerning the bottling of gas, prevention of price manipulation and setting guidelines for ensuring greater storage safety and distribution processes, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

A CDD official said that only one person sustained

light injuries from the explosions. He was discharged from hospital Saturday after treatment.

The official told the Jordan Times that CDD inspection teams were at the site all day Saturday in order to determine the cause of the explosions.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources plans another meeting soon to follow up and decide on safer warehouse storage of gas cylinders and the location of such facilities.

The meeting was attended by CDD Director General Lieutenant General Afif Ghoul, as well as the director of the JPRC, the president of the distributors of fuel, and several concerned officials.

Noting that the JPRC lately imported 50,000 additional cylinders to meet recent shortages, the government said that each cylinder sells for JD18.5 to consumers and the gas to fill the average cylinder is to be sold for no more than JD2, stressing that the distributors will be working extra hours in order to ensure wider distribution of the much needed energy source.

Meanwhile, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) reported Saturday that investigations into the causes of the explosions Friday evening near the Sports City, which caused extensive fires at two storage facilities were still under way.

A CDD official said that only one person sustained

Islamic, Western delegates explore commitments to human rights

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite sweeping worldwide political changes that many countries hoped would lead to democracy and stabilisation, the issue of human rights has been pushed to the forefront of

India's Rao humiliated in state polls

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party suffered a stinging setback Saturday in state polls that raised questions about the pace of free-market reforms and his prospects in 1996 general elections.

Congress, which had controlled all four states holding polls, lost its hold on three of them and was neck and neck with the opposition in the fourth.

The party, which has ruled India for all but three years since independence in 1947, was crushed in Mr. Rao's home state of Andhra Pradesh as well as in neighbouring Karnataka, by far the largest electoral prizes.

The prime minister's party had held overwhelming majorities in both southern states since the last elections in 1989.

The state elections have no direct impact on the party's wafer-thin parliamentary majority in the capital New Delhi. Pre-poll surveys showed voters were swayed

mostly by local issues and generally were not taking aim at Mr. Rao.

But the losses were significant because the south has provided Mr. Rao with his power base since he took office in 1991 and launched a far-reaching economic liberalisation programme.

"Congress does not exist in the north and it has been routed in the south," said the chief minister of the eastern state of Orissa, Biju Patnaik, of the centrist Janata Dal Party.

Mr. Rao's economic reforms have opened up India's markets, delighting foreign investors but bringing increased competition and hardship to many industries.

Congress leaders were set to meet in Delhi Saturday evening to take stock of the defeat.

"Our performance is simply shattering," Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee said.

In Andhra Pradesh, Congress was routed by the regional Telugu Desam Party

(TDP). Congress, which had held a 182-seat majority, had clinched only 14 seats to TDP's 160.

TDP chief N.T. Rama Rao wasted no time announcing he would immediately impose state-wide prohibition against all alcohol. Local businessmen said the ban, supported by women activists, would cost the state government \$250 million in excise levies.

"This will send a wrong signal to foreign investors," an official with a Delhi-based liquor factory said.

With all but one of 224 seats decided in Karnataka, the opposition Janata Dal had clinched 115.

Congress, which had held a 178-seat majority in the state, was running third with only 35 seats behind the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) 40.

Congress also lost control of the small northeastern state of Sikkim, and was in a dead heat in the southern state of Goa.

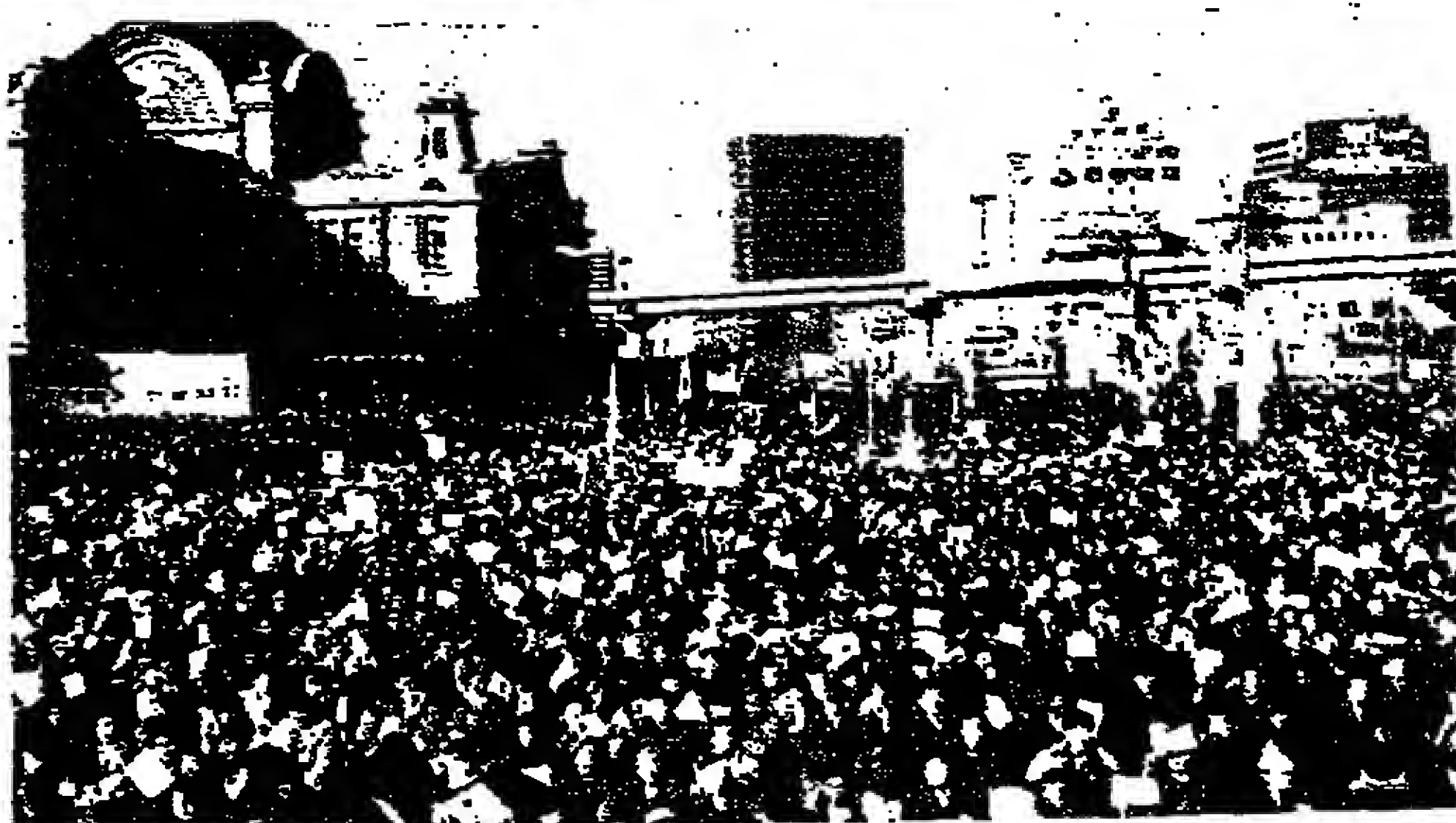
"The southern debacle is expected to weaken the prime minister, making new initiatives or controversial decisions much more difficult," the Indian Express said.

A major question mark now looms against his (Rao's) ability to win the 1996 general election," the Economic Times said in an editorial. Elections in five other states are set for February.

Business leaders said Mr. Rao would probably not reverse his liberalisation drive but with fresh elections due in five states next February and general polls in 1996, it could stall.

"They (reforms) have already slowed down," said R.C. Bhargava, managing director of car maker Maruti Udyog.

Some critics were quick to point the finger of blame at Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who has spearheaded the liberalisation drive. "It was all Manmohan's fault," read a front-page headline in the Asian Age.



Demonstrators stage a protest in front of Seoul railway station Saturday against the failure to indict two former generals-turned president in a 1979 coup. South Korean radical students hurled firebombs into a prosecution building and a ruling party office urging immediate punishment of the two former presidents Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo (AFP photo)

S. Korean farmers, dissidents stage violent protests in towns

SEOUL (AFP) — Thousands of students and farmers staged violent protests Saturday in South Korea against ratification of a world free trade accord and for punishment of two former presidents for their role in a 1979 coup, witnesses and reports said.

"Reject the trade accord," the protesters shouted in street protests in Seoul and two other provincial cities, referring to the agreement reached under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

At least 13 people were injured in the southern opposition stronghold of Chunju when riot police blocked a march by some 1,200 farmers and students, said the Yonhap News Agency.

The demonstrators in Chunju hurled rocks, driving

50 vehicles through police barricades, Yonhap said.

They also demanded the government retract its attempt to railroad ratification of the GATT bill through parliament without proper measures and to protect the nation's crumbling agriculture industry, it said.

In Seoul, some 1,000 students staged running protests, chased by officers who sprayed tear gas, after an anti-government rally with opposition party supporters, witnesses said.

"Indict the rebels," the students in Seoul shouted, urging the immediate punishment of former generals-turned-president Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo for their role in a 1979 coup.

The Seoul rally was sponsored by the main opposition group, the Democratic Party, which returned to parliament

Monday after a month-long boycott launched when prosecutors decided in October not to indict the two former presidents.

Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh have been found guilty of leading the 1979 mutiny that brought Mr. Chun to power.

The ruling camp has vowed to have parliament ratify the GATT bill before the year's end, buoyed by public polls favouring the government's liberalisation blueprint.

The global accord would create a new trade order under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and would force open South Korea's markets for foreign products.

Radicals also attacked a prosecution building and a ruling party office early Saturday, slamming President Kim Young-Sam's government for bowing to outside trade pressure.

Nujoma, SWAPO win Namibia landslide

WINDHOEK (R) — President Sam Nujoma and his ruling SWAPO swept to easy victory Saturday in Namibia's first post-independence elections, heading for a majority big enough to allow the party to re-write the constitution.

With only one out of 95 counting centres still to declare results, SWAPO had 70.6 per cent, the main opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) 21.9 per cent and the United Democratic Front (UDF) 2.8 per cent.

DTA Vice-President Katutura Kaura, saying voting had been largely along tribal lines, conceded defeat. "I am conceding defeat as we are heading for a tribal democracy," he told Reuters.

Final results are not expected until Monday when postal ballots are counted but the SWAPO lead is unassailable, giving the party the authority to re-write the 1990 independence constitution.

Political analysts said they

expected SWAPO to end with about 50 seats in the 72-member parliament, compared to the 42 it now holds.

The DTA, which holds 21, was expected to hang on to about 17 and the UDF to have the balance. Smaller opposition parties did not make the one per cent threshold needed for parliament.

In the presidential race Mr. Nujoma, leader of the pre-1990 struggle for independence from neighbouring South Africa, held 71.7 per cent of the vote against 25.5 per cent for the DTA's Mshaka Myungo, his only opponent.

SWAPO wants a two-thirds majority on parliament to re-write the constitution and enable Mr. Nujoma to serve a third term.

Mr. Nujoma believes the existing constitution favours the opposition parties.

In some northern constituencies SWAPO polled more than 94 per cent of the

vote.

There is little to separate the main parties politically but each draws its support from different ethnic and tribal groupings in Namibia. The formerly Marxist SWAPO has its power base among the majority Owambo tribe.

Political scientist Andre Du Pisani told state television: "The loyalty towards the (SWAPO) party and the personality is very evident in the north...the country must prepare for SWAPO's two-thirds majority."

Mr. Nujoma led SWAPO in a 23-year bush war against South African rule of the huge desert territory, twice the size of France. Independence was agreed in a deal linked to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

Officials said indications were that 55 to 65 per cent of the 650,000 registered voters had cast ballots, compared to a 90 per cent turn-out in the 1989 pre-independence vote.

Chiapas mediators warn of civil war in Mexico

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Mediators seeking peace between Mexico's government and peasant guerrillas warned that the country is on the brink of civil war and called on the army to ease its pressure on the rebels.

The National Intermediation Commission said late Friday that the southern state of Chiapas, where so-called Zapatista rebels this week threatened fresh military attacks to end an 11-month-old ceasefire, was close to exploding into violence.

"Mexico is in danger of a civil war," said the commission, which is led by peace mediator Bishop Samuel Ruiz and several other dignitaries.

In their statement, the commission members urged the government to cut its military and political pressure on the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), which launched its rebellion for democracy and indigenous rights on Jan. 1.

"Priority should be given to breaking the military circle around the EZLN and to a policy that does not look to take away (the Zapatistas') social support as part of a counter-insurgency war," they said.

Opposition leader Amado Avendano swore in Thursday as "rebel governor," pledging to set up a rival administration for Chiapas's majority indigenous population and lead a civil resistance movement making the state ungovernable for the elected Governor Eduardo Robledo.

Mr. Avendano urged villages where he had the Zapatistas have strong support to stop paying taxes to the state government, instead contributing directly to his rival administration.



File picture showing Joycelyn Elders testifying source Committee during her confirmation before the Senate Labour and Human Resources Committee in Capitol Hill (AFP photo)

White House denies Brown resigning

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Friday denied reports that Commerce Secretary Ron Brown planned to resign.

A White House spokeswoman, responding to a report on Kyodo News Service quoting U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale telling Japanese government officials that Mr. Brown planned to resign, said, "that is just inaccurate."

"Ron Brown just the other day said he had no plans to resign from the administration. He said he considers his job the best job in Washington," she said.

Kyodo News Service said Mr. Mondale gave the information Friday night to Yoshiro Mori, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the largest of Japan's three ruling parties.

Elders resigns

Meanwhile, Joycelyn Elders was forced to resign as U.S. Surgeon General Friday for suggesting schools should teach about masturbation. She was the first black American to hold that post.

As America's top public health official, her outspoken views on sexuality earned her the undying enmity of many Christians and conservatives.

In addition, her uncompromising promotion of abortion rights, sex education and condom distribution in schools made her a favourite villain of the Republican Party and an issue in last month's congressional elections.

Other unguarded comments lauding homosexual adoption and suggesting the govern-

ment consider possible legislation of drugs outraged many people beyond the right-wing spectrum as well, turning Mrs. Elders into a liability for President Bill Clinton.

It was yet another off-the-cuff remark earlier this month, suggesting that children might be taught in school about masturbation, that led to her downfall.

"(With) regard to masturbation, I think that is something that is a part of human sexuality and it's part of something that perhaps should be taught" as a means of diverting youngsters from riskier forms of sex, she said at a meeting on world AIDS day at the United Nations on Dec. 1.

U.S. gay groups immediately leapt to Mrs. Elders' defence.

"It's a chilling development," said Donald Suggs, a spokesperson for the Gay Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

"Elders had an obligation to be forthcoming on such issues. It's really chilling that she'd lose her job for focusing on this vital issue," said Mr. Suggs, whose group promotes fair representation of gays and lesbians in the media.

Daniel Wolfe of the Gay Mens' Health Crisis, the largest AIDS service in the United States, told Reuters: "Mrs. Elders' comments were awkward, uncomfortable and embarrassing. But they were also lifesaving. Our fear about all of this is that it will make all other government leaders less likely to speak out frankly about the difficult truth of AIDS. The fact is that masturbation

is an activity that does not put you at risk for HIV," said Mr. Wolfe.

Mrs. Elders' life in many ways has been an inspiring story of how intelligence and guts could overcome bad circumstances.

Born in Arkansas to the family of a sharecropper in 1933, Mrs. Elders as a child had to walk five miles (eight km) to and from her segregated school. She never saw a doctor until her first year of college.

Aged 15, she received a scholarship from the United Methodist Church to attend Philander Smith College in Little Rock, an all black school. Three years later, she entered the U.S. army as a lieutenant and in 1956 enrolled in the University of Arkansas Medical School on the GI Bill, becoming only the second black woman to graduate.

Mrs. Elders had become a distinguished pediatrician with 150 articles to her name when she was appointed by then-Governor Bill Clinton as director of the Arkansas Department of Health in 1987.

She soon found herself at the centre of controversy by creating school-based health clinics that dispensed contraceptives on demand. Opponents called her "condom queen" and "director of the Arkansas holocaust" for her advocacy of abortion rights.

Appointed Surgeon General in 1993, Mrs. Elders told the Senate during confirmation hearings she wanted to change the behaviour and attitudes of Americans towards health by putting prevention first.

Chinese town grieves as it buries its children

BEIJING (R) — Thousands gripped in China's northwest oil town of Karamay Saturday, standing in falling snow to mourn a generation as they buried more of the 300 children burned to death in China's worst fire in 15 years.

"The whole city is immersed in grief," a local official, who refused to be identified, said by telephone. "For this town this is a disaster that has drowned all hope."

"Karamay will not recover from this sorrow for years — how can we even think of passing the Chinese New Year festival?"

China's deadliest fire in 15 years raged through the Friendship Hall Cinema in Karamay, near the border with the former Soviet Union, Thursday evening when it was packed with more than 900 people, including at least 500 schoolchildren performing in and watching a cultural show.

Officials said 311 people, mostly children, were killed and 225 injured, but added they were unable to give an exact death toll because many parents took the bodies of their children home immediately to mourn.

The youngest to die were eight years old.

Hospitals said 78 of the injured were in critical condition with 11 unlikely to survive.

Japan's new opposition unfurls its flag

YOKOHAMA, Japan (R) — Japan's newest and largest opposition party unfurled a reformist flag in its inaugural convention Saturday, calling for a "third opening" of the country to the world.

"We must take off the old coat of parties that worked only for the benefit of a small group of people," party head Toshiaki Kaifu, a popular prime minister from 1989 to 1991, told the gala launch of the New Frontier Party (NFP).

Mr. Kaifu and his deputy Ichiro Ozawa said the NFP should spearhead radical reforms in political, social and economic structures similar to the fundamental changes that had previously swept Japan.

When the United States forced open Japan from the three centuries of isolation and 1945 when America introduced democracy after World War II.

Party officials chose Yokohama for the event because it was Japan's first modern port city to be opened to the world.

"We will support the government as long as they keep up with correct reforms," said Mr. Kaifu.

"But if not, well, we can surely replace them," he said to cheers and loud applause.

from the 6,000 party delegates.

In a race against fellow ex-Premier Tsutomu Hata, Mr. Kaifu was elected last Thursday to head the new party, formed by a merger of nine non-Communist opposition parties.

The NFP becomes Japan's second largest party with 180 lawmakers in the 511-seat lower house. The largest party is the 300-strong Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), senior partner in an unwieldy coalition with Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama's Socialist Party.

Mr. Kaifu and Mr. Ozawa are ex-LDP men fighting to bring down their old party.

In an interview in Saturday's Asahi Shimbun, a confident Kaifu called on Mr. Murayama to dissolve parliament for early general elections, not scheduled until mid-1997.

The Murayama government has not been baptised through elections and has violated campaign platform, "Mr. Kaifu said in the interview. "He should ask the people to make a judgement at the earliest possible date."

On Friday, Mr. Murayama rejected calls for early elections because he said the nation could not afford a political vacuum with pressing domestic and foreign policy issues to be solved.

The introduction of a single-seat electoral system spurred the formation of the new combined opposition party because the new system works against parties in campaign funding.

The NFP convention opened with a 20-minute rendition of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Song of Joy, performed by a full orchestra and a 300-member chorus.

Hi-tech displays of the party logo, a ship's steering wheel, and a giant television screen gave more colour than is usual to a Japanese political convention.

Mr. Kaifu said the two main pillars of the new party were "continuous reforms" and "responsible politics."

He cited two alarming issues facing the nation.

The first was the bullying suicide of a 13-year old boy and the second a recent report ranking productivity among nations — Japan had kept the top position for eight years but gave it up to the United States and now ranks third, beaten also by Singapore.

"There is a growing concern about education and productivity," Mr. Kaifu said. "Our duty is to address this."

Christmas manuscript sells for \$255,000

NEW YORK (AP) — A single sheet of paper bearing a handwritten copy of the classic poem that begins "Twas the night before Christmas," sold Friday for \$255,000 at Christie's auction house. Author Clement Clarke Moore left just three copies of the poem written in his own hand. This version was written in 1860 when he was 81. Moore had transcribed the copy at the request of an admirer, cramming all 56 lines onto one small sheet in his tiny, perfect handwriting. Moore wrote the poem — formally titled A Visit From St. Nicholas — in 1822. Legend has it that the idea came to him while he was out buying a turkey for his wife to roast on Christmas Eve and give to the poor of the local parish. Christie's had estimated that the manuscript, written in brown ink, would sell for between \$70,000 and \$90,000. A bidding war drove the price up and the victor, entrepreneur Ralph Gadiel, said he was determined to have it at any price. Gadiel, whose Illinois-based International Resourcing Services Company sells gifts and collectibles, plans to market a limited edition of copies of the manuscript next Christmas.

Gay German lawmaker seeks to marry partner

BONN (AFP) — A gay German lawmaker wants to marry the man he has been living with for two-and-a-half years and has requested a civil ceremony marriage licence from the city of Cologne, the German daily Bild said Saturday. "My partner is French. I love him and I want to marry him," 33-year-old Volker Beck told Bild. Mr. Beck, who was elected on Oct. 16 as a candidate of the Green Party, is the first openly gay deputy in the German parliament. He said his demand for a marriage licence had been turned down. "I am a single man against my own wishes," Mr. Beck told Bild. "If I was hospitalised for a serious illness, my partner would not have the right to visit me or take a decision on whether I should be operated on in an emergency situation," he said. "If the signatory to a lease agreement dies, the bereaved has no right to stay in the house and has to leave," he added. Bild, Germany's top selling daily, estimates the number of homosexuals in Germany at 3.2 million, put at two million gay men and 1.2 million gay women. So far, no homosexuals have managed to marry in Germany, but several couples have placed complaints before the constitutional court demanding the right. Among the most famous, are television personality Hella Von Sinnen and her partner Cornelia Scheel, daughter of former President Walter Scheel.

Body branding gains in popularity

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — They call it "slash and burn." One second's exposure to white-hot metal for a lasting scar and, presumably, lasting satisfaction. It's called body branding, and it joins piercing as the latest in personal statements. "With tattooing you're getting something embedded in your skin. But with branding, it's bringing out something that's already there — it's more natural," said Adam Huffman, who pierces skin at a New York shop and has twin suns branded on his forearms. "The pain? It's not as bad as anyone would think," he said. "It's actually kind of soothing." Mr. Huffman, 22, said venous mod body arts, where he works, gets only one branding customer every month or two, usually men in their mid-20s. The real action, he said, is on the west coast. In San Francisco, most professional branding is done in two shops where peering noses, lips and more private parts are still the principal business. Three to six customers a week show up in search of a more permanent — and more painful — statement, said the owner of nomad body piercing. He goes by the single name of Blake. While most of the clientele are white and between 20 and 40, branding began in the 1930s and 1940s among black college fraternities, especially in the south. Mr. Blake said, "It's not a new thing — anyone who watches Monday night football has seen it." He said, "It's a hard-core right of passage."

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Legend has it that the idea came to him while he was out buying a turkey for his wife to roast on Christmas Eve and gave to the poet of the local parish. Moore had estimated that the manuscript, written in brown ink, would sell for between \$70,000 and \$90,000.

A bidding war drove the price up and the victor, entrepreneur Ralph Gribble, said he was determined to have it at any price. Gribble, whose Illinois-based International Resource Services Company sells gifts and collectibles, plans to market a limited edition of copies of the manuscript next Christmas.

Gay German lawmaker seeks to marry partner

BONN (AP) — A gay German lawmaker wants to marry the man he has been living with for two-and-a-half years and has requested a ceremony. The lawmaker, Hans-Joachim Lauth, is a member of the German Bundestag.

Lauth, 33, is a member of the Social Democratic Party, the first openly gay member of the Bundestag. He said he has been living with his partner, a man named Hans-Joachim Lauth, for two-and-a-half years.

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Chechen soldiers stand next to the eternal flame of a World War II memorial during a mid-day prayer on a frosty day in the main square in Grozny as the tensions between the breakaway Republic of Chechnya and Russia go on (AFP)

Jets bomb Chechnya as Russia seals its borders

GROZNY, Russia (Agencies) — Planes bombed sites near the Chechen capital Grozny Saturday as tension in the rebel region reached new, dangerous highs.

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency said the Russian government was sealing off the Chechen borders and closing its airspace.

"The Russian government today ordered the Interior Ministry to seal off the borders with Chechnya and the Defence Ministry to seal off the airspace of this republic," TASS said.

It said the decision was taken in accordance with a

decree issued by President Boris Yeltsin Friday. This authorised the cabinet to use all possible means to regain control of the rebel region.

Chechnya, a mountainous area on Russia's southern rim, declared independence in 1991.

Russia has been building up troops on the Chechen borders for the last two weeks, since the region's Moscow-backed opposition failed to seize Grozny and oust separatist Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Saturday's air raid was the latest in a series since the abortive opposition assault.



Chechen soldiers sit on top of an armoured personnel carrier that was brought in to guard the presidential palace in the main square in Grozny (AFP photo)

At least nine people have died in previous attacks but there were no initial reports of casualties from Saturday's raid.

The raid was in two stages, starting at around one p.m. (1000 GMT).

First a high altitude bomber made four passes high over Grozny and a Reuters correspondent heard loud explosions from the town of Argun, 15 kilometres south-east of the Chechen capital. A thick cloud of black smoke rose up from the town.

Two low-flying jets appeared minutes after the bomber, firing at least one missile towards a residential area some two kilometres from the centre. The missile hit an apartment block, but did not explode.

Chechen anti-aircraft forces responded with a barrage of fire from light and heavy anti-aircraft guns. Armed men in the square below the presidential palace unleashed round after round of bullets from Kalashnikov weapons, but the planes flew on.

"The situation in Grozny had been tense throughout the day.

Few people could be seen on the streets of the town of some 400,000 people, except near the central presidential palace where about 1,000 people have been holding a non-stop rally to support Mr. Dudayev.

Mr. Yeltsin has sent Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and Interior Minister Viktor Yerin to North Ossetia, a region bordering Chechnya in the north Caucasus where most of the big military force flown in over the last 10 days is massed.

They joined counter-intelligence chief Sergei Stepashin and Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov,

Bosnian Serbs free hostages; ease confrontation with U.N.

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serb forces eased their confrontation with the United Nations Saturday, freeing scores of U.N. hostages and allowing a food convoy to reach Sarajevo.

But the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) warned that some of its duties, such as anti-sniper patrols in the capital and armoured escorts for aid convoys, would grind to a halt unless the Serbs lifted a blockade on fuel supplies.

Spokesman Jan-Dirk Merveldt told reporters: "Nothing short of a total freedom of movement for UNPROFOR will be acceptable... The quicker we can get aid to those in desperate trouble, the better for the whole community."

European Union governments, having rejected calls for a U.N. withdrawal from Bosnia, ended a summit in Germany by voicing strong support for the U.N. aid programme which the Serbs have obstructed systematically for months.

In a communique condemning the Serb onslaught on Bosnia which provoked the present crisis, the EU said UNPROFOR "should continue its crucial mission of providing humanitarian assistance and saving human life."

Diplomatic and military tensions were eased by signals from the Bosnian Serbs that they are ready to talk again about a peace plan drawn up by the major powers, which they rejected in August.



Serb soldiers check boxes with humanitarian aid opened by a French U.N. soldier at a check point in the Serb-controlled Croatian region of Krajina. The nine-tonne UNHCR convoy carrying some 90 tonnes of desperately needed food supplies later was allowed to pass and reached its destination, the Muslim enclave of Bihać (AFP photo)

The plan would divide Bosnia roughly in two between the Serbs and a confederation of Muslims and Croats.

No date was set for talks but the Serbs asked for early consultations with U.S. envoy Charles Redman, who will have to secure the agreement of the Muslim-led Bosnian government to any change in the plan, which it has already accepted.

There was indirect evidence of the Bosnian Serbs' apparent willingness to negotiate when rump Yugoslavia restored their telephone communications Friday.

These were cut in August when Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic imposed a military and economic blockade on them as punishment for turning down the peace plan.

Envoy of the five-nation "contact group" have shuttled between the warring sides to promote renewed talks since the Bihać fighting brought Serb-U.N. relations to their lowest ebb of the 32-month war.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) seized about 500 U.N. peacekeepers as hostages against NATO air strikes, activated missile bases which threatened NATO warplanes and tightened the noose on aid deliveries.

Mr. Merveldt said the last 187 hostages were released Saturday but other U.N. sources said four were still detained in Banja Luka in northern Bosnia.

The food convoy to Sarajevo brought 180 tonnes of grain which assured immediate bread supplies but the real test of Serb good intentions lay in the lifting of the fuel blockade, described by Mr. Merveldt as "particularly worrisome."

Ukrainian U.N. peacekeepers in Sarajevo had no petrol for their armoured vehicles and French troops were unable to carry out anti-sniper patrols.

Peacekeepers in the eastern Muslim enclaves of Gorazde and Srebrenica could not use their vehicles and patrolled on foot despite the constant threat from marksman.

U.N. spokeswoman Miriam Suchaki said UNPROFOR would stop escorting aid convoys Monday and be unable to send repair crews to Sarajevo utilities without new supplies of fuel.

UNPROFOR commander, General Sir Michael Rose, set out to try to reach the Bihać enclave and waited for Serb permission to enter it as fighting continued between Muslims and Serbs.

The U.N. blamed Serbs for mortar attacks which killed a woman and wounded seven other people Friday in Bihać town, a U.N. protected "safe area."

"We view this attack as a clear intimidation aimed at the civilian population," spokesman Matthew Risley said.

Until it receded Friday, the prospect of an UNPROFOR withdrawal threatened to draw NATO and U.S. forces into the conflict to protect the lightly-armed U.N. troops from attack while they pulled out.

A Western diplomat in Sarajevo said that although the Serbs brought about the confrontation by their harassment of the U.N., it was in their interests that the peacekeepers remain as insurance against NATO air attacks.

"The Serbs should be on their knees with flowers begging the U.N. to stay," he added.

Meanwhile one of President Bill Clinton's harshest critics Friday gave the U.S. leader strong support for his offer to send troops to cover any U.N. withdrawal from Bosnia.

"I am very supportive of that," said Republican House

Pentagon buys V-22; cancels Stealth missile

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The Pentagon said Friday it will go ahead with the revolutionary \$30 billion V-22 helicopter programme, but will cancel a \$13 billion "Stealth" missile plan in post-cold war juggling of U.S. weapons.

The V-22 announcement by Defence Secretary William Perry was a major boon to Boeing Co. and Textron Inc. They are developing the off-delayed tilt-rotor helicopter, which takes off vertically but flies like a regular aircraft.

Indefinite postponement of the army's Comanche attack helicopter, a \$40 billion programme under development by Boeing and United Technologies Corp. Instead, the Pentagon will buy only two flyable prototypes in the foreseeable future in a cut that will cost the firm \$2.1 billion through 2001.

Cutting fiscal 1996 research and development funds for the air force's F-22 "Stealth" fighter by \$200 million. But that is not expected to cause major delay in the air force plan to buy about 400 of the jets for \$75 billion in the next century.

Reducing construction of Arleigh Burke class destroyers from 18 to 16 over the next six years to save \$1.5 billion.

Delaying construction of a new class of U.S. attack submarine by one year to 2001 to save \$1.5 billion.

Delaying development of the Marine Corps' advanced amphibious assault vehicle for two years, pushing replacement of current landing craft beyond the turn of the century.

Mr. Perry stressed that the cuts were much smaller than those he had anticipated before President Bill Clinton announced last week that he would seek an additional \$25 billion in defence spending from Congress for the next six years.

"These cuts, we believe, are prudent, and they will not interfere with our efforts to develop new wave of weaponry needed for the 21st century," the secretary told reporters.

The military is now expected to buy over 500 of the troop-carrying, turbo-prop V-22s in the coming years for the Marine Corps and special operations forces, which use older-style helicopters dating back to the Vietnam War.

At a news conference, Mr. Perry announced a number of arms decisions including a major delay in the army's planned "Comanche" helicopter as well as cancellation of a \$13 billion tri-service standoff attack missile programme being developed by Northrop-Grumman Corp.

The plan to build 1,200 radar-evading "Stealth" cruise missiles for the armed forces has been battered by technical and cost problems.

"That made it a very logical candidate for cancellation, and we are doing that," Mr. Perry said.

Mr. Perry and Deputy Defence Secretary John Deutch told reporters they had decided on a number of weapons delays to save \$7.5 billion in development costs over six years including:

"We believe that these adjustments are acceptable. They protect our technology base, and they allow important force modernisation programmes to continue at a rate that we can afford and they do provide the necessary savings which help us increase funding for readiness."

Meanwhile, former CIA Director William Colby said Friday the end of the cold war has brought the chance for large cuts in the agency, especially in its budget.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) budget, officially secret, is known to be about \$3 billion a year.

"The Soviet forces were at the Fulda Gap, ready to attack at four o'clock next morning," he said. "They could have been at the English Channel in two weeks. We had to be able to give any indication we could if they seemed about to do that."

The Fulda Gap is the area in central Germany where it was thought Soviet forces could most easily penetrate to the West.

Now the extremely expensive array of technology used to spot the preliminaries to an invasion is no longer needed, Mr. Colby said. He estimated that it would take five years to rebuild Russian forces to the level of a renewed menace.

Mr. Colby, 74, is now a Washington lawyer and director of an investment project called the Vietnam Frontier Fund. He was CIA chief in Saigon during the Vietnam War. Earlier this month, the Vietnamese government — successor of the

North Vietnam he fought against — refused him a visa to visit the country.

He pointed to other indications that the CIA's scope could be reduced.

It is no longer fighting an expensive covert war against the Soviet in Afghanistan, he noted.

If today's situation in Bosnia had occurred 15 years ago, Soviet forces would have been on high alert nearby and so would NATO forces — "It could have been World War III," he said. Now Russia and NATO forces are cooperating in Bosnia, he went on, and even if they are not doing such a good job there is a big difference between confrontation and cooperation.

Mr. Colby also suggested that it may be time to dissolve the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

"It was a great victory, but its job is finished," he said.

He added that a Western European military alliance is not needed either, as long as the Russians behave well.

Mr. Colby urged that CSCE, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, replace NATO as the basis for Europe's security. He said he was not proposing that the United States abandon Europe. He pointed out that the CSCE includes both the United States and nearly all European countries, Russia and other former Soviet republics.

"The idea is to include, not exclude," he said.

Mr. Colby spoke in French to the Club Togequeville, a group of mostly French reporters.

SAO TOME (R) — The Angolan rebel movement UNITA said Saturday government forces had attacked its positions near the northern town of Malange, breaking an already shaky ceasefire agreement.

UNITA Radio, monitored in the island state of Sao Tome and Principe, said government troops had since Wednesday attacked the villages of Conda and Longa, some 15 kilometres east of Malange. It gave no details of casualties.

A UNITA statement released in Lisbon late Friday said government forces had captured the town of Lombe, 20 kilometres west of Malange, on Dec. 3 and were patrolling north and south of Lombe.

A U.N. World Food Programme plane was hit by gunfire as it prepared to land with food supplies for Malange Wednesday.

An aid source said Thursday the aircraft was hit by "a significant number of bullets" as it came in to land at Malange. The plane touched down safely at the town and no one was hurt.

Relief flights to the town have been suspended until guarantees had been received for the safety of aircraft.

Despite the Nov. 22 ceasefire in the 19-year civil war, road access to Malange is still difficult because of minefields, the rainy season and the threat of attack.

The UNITA statement said government forces were preparing to advance on Negage, which has an airfield, near the northern town of Uige.

These ceasefire violations have increased and led to constant provocations and attacks by MPLA troops, with the clear intention of advancing on Negage at any moment," it said.

No independent confirmation of UNITA's accusations was available.

Rebels accuse Angola of violating ceasefire

SAO TOME (R) — The Angolan rebel movement UNITA said Saturday government forces had attacked its positions near the northern town of Malange, breaking an already shaky ceasefire agreement.

Clinton attacks Republican welfare plan

MIAMI (R) — President Bill Clinton Saturday called for welfare reform next year, but said a Republican plan suggesting that the children of some recipients might be put in orphanages was "dead wrong."

Mr. Clinton, in Miami for the Summit of the Americas meeting of 34 hemisphere leaders, used his weekly radio address to the nation to focus on the need for welfare reform — a principle endorsed by both Democrats and Republicans.

"We have to change welfare so that it drives people toward the freedom of work, not the confines of dependence," Mr. Clinton said. "Work is still the best social programme ever invented."

He said that "we won't have ended welfare as we know it until its central focus is to move people off welfare and into a job so that they can support themselves and their families."

Mr. Clinton condemned a Republican proposal, contained in the "contract with America" offered by Newt Gingrich, the next speaker of the House of Representatives, the leader of the majority party in the 435-member

body.

The plan would ban states from paying welfare benefits to children whose paternity is not established and to those born out of wedlock to women under 18.

One possible use of the money saved would be for states to establish orphanages, according to the Republican plan.

"There's some people out there who argue that we should let some sort of big, new institution take parents' place, that we should even take children away from parents, and put the children in orphanages," Mr. Clinton said.

"Well those people are dead wrong," he said. "We need less governmental interference in family life, not more."

Mr. Clinton called Thursday for a national conference on welfare reform in January with the goal of getting a bipartisan proposal before Congress early next year.

"There are a lot of ideas out there for reforming welfare — some are really good, and some are just political attention getters," Mr. Clinton said, adding that "everybody agrees that the system is badly broken and needs to be fixed."

Mr. Clinton, who had campaigned for president vowing to "change welfare as we know it" earlier this year presented Congress with a proposal that would cost some \$9 billion over five years. It never reached either chamber of Congress for a vote.

His proposal would have moved about 500,000 people off welfare rolls and into jobs by the year 2004 — but that's a small part of the 4.5 million Americans on welfare.

"There's no greater gap between mainstream American values and modern government than we find in the welfare system," Mr. Clinton said.

While saying the system was created "for all the right reasons," Mr. Clinton said it "undermines the very values — work, family and responsibility — that people need to put themselves back on track."

He noted that one of the purposes of the summit was to encourage and develop trade within the hemisphere "so that we can create high-wage jobs and new opportunities for our people here at home."

ROME (R) — A court hearing to decide whether Italy's former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti should be tried on mafia charges was put off again Saturday to give defence lawyers more time to lead through a mountain of documents.

Prosecuting magistrates have based their case against the former Christian Democrat on testimony from mob turncoats.

They alleged that the master political wheeler-dealer protected organised crime in the corridors of power as a full-fledged member of the mafia.

Mr. Andreotti, a devout Roman Catholic, has called the allegations blasphemy, arguing that he is the victim of a mafia plot to punish him for crackdowns by governments he led.

His lawyers say they are still digesting 56,000 pages of prosecution evidence and a further 6,000 pages of transcripts submitted by magistrates last month.

"Having to read through

Mafia hearing for 'Mr Italy' postponed

It was the second time that Mr. Andreotti's lawyers had won a delay. The hearing originally was to have opened on Oct. 19.

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"Having to read through

60,000 pages is terrifying," said Odoardo Ascarelli, one of the two defence lawyers. "I'm reading day and night," he told Reuters.

Mr. Andreotti, a life senator, was summoned Saturday to testify at the trial in Reggio Calabria, on the toe of Italy, of Mr. Riina and 13 other alleged mafiosi over the murder in 1991 of a local magistrate.

He exercised a right to remain silent pending clarification of his own position at next month's Palermo hearing.

"The only news in this visit of mine is that I was able to see Riina for the first time, even if from a distance. I've only seen him on television before," Mr. Andreotti told reporters.

Prosecutors in the Palermo case alleged Mr. Andreotti had close ties to Mr. Riina, who has been held in virtual isolation following his arrest in 1993 after 23 years at large.

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Deeds speak louder

THE BOSNIAN conflict is poised to occupy centre stage when the summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) convenes in Casablanca next week. The bankruptcy of the United Nations' policy in dealing with the three-year-old armed conflict has become clearer by the day. There appears to be no prospect whatsoever for diplomacy to succeed in the face of the Serb determination to redraw the map of Bosnia by force. Even NATO appears to be ready to relinquish its role there after Moscow succeeded to checkmate its long-standing efforts to defuse the situation militarily. Against this backdrop, the Islamic states seem ready now to exercise a more effective role in the conflict. Of course it remains unclear what the OIC plans to do to redeem its past stance which was characterised by inaction and rhetorical posture. Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic may have set the tone for the forthcoming OIC summit by demanding a more determined effort by the Muslim states to come to the rescue of his country and people. The question is what would the Islamic countries do more in the future than what they have already done, except having more of them willing to contribute troops to the U.N. Protection Forces (UNPROFOR). Now that several Western countries made known their decision to withdraw their troops from the international service with UNPROFOR, this peacekeeping avenue is of course available to the OIC countries, but it is doubtful that it can change much of the military situation in the conflict-stricken country. It is also doubtful that the fighting Serbs would welcome more troops from the Islamic countries, even under the pretext of peace-keeping missions. Even financial contributions from the OIC member states would not be able to offer the Bosnian Muslims effective relief in the face of the arms embargo still being enforced on all the countries of former Yugoslavia.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asef Ahmad Ali has hinted recently that the OIC has a plan to assist the Bosnians in their ordeal. Although Mr. Ali described this plan as an action plan, in reality it turned out to be nothing more than a planned meeting between the OIC contact group and an international contact group comprising the U.S., Russia, France, Britain and Germany. If this is the sort of action plan that the OIC has in mind, then we are afraid we are back to where we have started three years ago.

It is better to be candid with the Bosnians than to keep on making them believe that real help is on its way. Then the Bosnians would have to make their own calculations and draw the necessary conclusions instead of waiting for effective assistance that remains elusive.

The OIC is therefore invited to offer the Bosnians a more coherent policy that they can understand and cope with. By pretending that the Islamic states agonise over the fate of the Bosnian Muslims and offering nothing more than words, they would be in effect not only deceiving the Bosnians but undermining the OIC's credibility.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

LEY EXPRESSING his surprise that the Arab inhabitants of Palestine had exceeded the two million mark, the Israeli government, Yitzhak Rabin, is paving the way for his government to announce that it would not tolerate the repatriation of the displaced Palestinians, said Mahmoud Rimawi, writer in Al Ra'i daily Saturday. It is rather strange to hear the premier make such a statement at a time when his foreign minister and President Arafat were having discussions over calling for a meeting involving the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Jordanians and the Egyptians to determine the future of the refugees and the displaced because of Israel's occupation of their own homeland, said the writer. The least that can be said about Mr. Rabin's statement is that it runs contrary to the spirit of peace and reflects the racist nature of Zionism, added the writer. The writer said that the Palestinian land is now inhabited by more than five million Jews brought in from other countries to help Israel perpetuate its occupation of Arab lands and that one quarter of a million Jews live in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. By hinting that Israel can accept no repatriation of Arabs to their lawful territories, said the writer, Mr. Rabin is putting one more obstacle in the path of establishing a durable peace in the region.

MOHAMMAD KAWASH, a writer in Al Dostour bitterly criticised the Islamist extremist groups who have been killing writers and journalists in Algeria and who have recently slaughtered innocent school-girls as barbaric and amassing the image of Islam. What is happening in Algeria is a major distortion of Islam through continued acts of violence and repeated attacks on the lives of innocent people, said the writer. While the Islamists in the east conduct their opposition to existing regimes and governments through dialogue and positive and constructive criticism, those in Algeria have been resorting to violence and bloodshed to achieve their goals, added the writer. He Algerian Islamists' actions are not only cause of disgust and horror, they actually help strengthen those elements opposed to Islam and those who are instigating the world against the Muslim nations, concluded the writer.

SUNDAY'S ECONOMIC PULSE

North, south Mediterranean partnership gains momentum

IN THEIR session in Lisbon, held in June 1992, the European Union showed a keen interest in the areas beyond their immediate region, especially their southern and eastern flanks, in Maghreb and Mashrek. It seems, they had realised that their own security and stability would not be assured as long as these neighbouring areas remained poor, divided and backward, and consequently a source of trouble.

Although economic considerations are and were always of utmost importance to the European Union, the Europeans found strong interests in the south and east Mediterranean regions in terms of security and social stability. After all, this area is a source of legal and illegal migration, as millions of North Africans and Turks live permanently in France and Germany respectively. The area is also perceived as home for fundamentalism, fanaticism and terrorism, all of which are the natural results of poverty and despair.

In the European Union recent meeting in Corfu, in June 1994, the concept of partnership started to gather momentum. The commission was asked to formulate guidelines for a new union's Mediterranean policy for peace, stability, security and the socio-economic development of the region. A Euro-Mediterranean conference in 1995 is now

under consideration. The purpose is to establish a partnership between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, along with specific programmes and budgets, taking into account the interdependence between Europe and the Mediterranean area in environment, energy, migration, trade and investment.

The Europeans give priority to Morocco, Tunis and Malta in the Maghreb area and Turkey, Israel and Cyprus in the Mashrek. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's initiative succeeded in making the European Union expand the partnership project to cover the remaining countries in North Africa and Arab Mashrek, including Jordan.

The partnership under consideration does not mean joining the European Union. There shall remain two distinct groups. The Europeans may deal with each country separately, but in accordance with a uniform agreement. The major step is to have a free trade area with full exemption of custom tax and other restrictions. The European Union will provide grants and other forms of aid to the tune of European Currency Units (ECUs) 5.5 billion over five years. It will conduct dialogues over political issues, policies, democracy, good governance and human rights.

In order for us to enter into a free trade arrangement with Europe, a lot of adjustment, modernisation, efficiency and competitiveness are needed. Mashrek and Maghreb countries will be given an interim period to adjust and reduce customs protection progressively, over 10 to 15 years. Besides, there will be cash, injected as compensation, which will go to governments and not to the casualities and victims among weak industries. Dialogue is a political expression for teaching us to apply democracy, respect human rights, put an end to corruption and mismanagement of resources and pushing governments in this direction.

The north and south Mediterranean partnership could be a more viable alternative to the so-called Middle East market, which is believed to be an American idea, but with no one formally calling for its implementation or providing a meaningful guidance or mechanism to go about and underwrite the inevitable costs of adjustment involved.

The Europeans, our colonists in the first half of this century, are able to change their image in the eyes of the Arabs, contrary to the Americans who failed to project themselves as acceptable partners or friends of the Arabs. America behaves like a country whose sole supremacy is a gift it does not know what to make out of.

By Shlomo Ben-Ami

AS WITH most peace accords in modern times, the debate over the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinians tends to oscillate between idealism and realism, righteousness and political naiveté. "Oslo," which is being discussed by the Israeli cabinet this week, was never intended to be a peace treaty; it offered only an agreed framework for a solution of a century-old, intricate conflict. It is from this perspective that its record so far should be assessed.

I have always believed that the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians called for a permanent solution, instead of the complex chain of inter-dependent interim stages agreed upon in Oslo. And anyway, the difficult structure of the Oslo accords creates too many uncertainties; clearly, the complexity is being conceived by the enemies of the agreement — Hamas, Islamic Jihad and others — as a standing invitation for its destruction.

But the Palestinians do not hold the monopoly on frustration. The logic and consequences of the Oslo framework are being challenged by many Israelis, who feel deceived by the failure of the agreement to provide them with greater personal security (the number of victims of Palestinian terrorism since Oslo has now reached 100). Some would conclude from this state of affairs that salvation lies in speeding up the negotiations and proceeding to a permanent settlement without delay.

But others are existentially worried by still unanswered questions: is the suicidal brand of terrorism of the extremist Palestinian organisations just their way of promoting the cause of an independent state in Gaza and the West Bank? Or does it represent a more fundamental, and indeed fundamentalist, rejection of any peaceful deal with Israel? Is Yasser Arafat's reluctance to confront his opponents a tactical move or an indication that he does not disavow their strategic objectives; indeed, perhaps even shares them?

For decades, the international community and most Palestinian organisations have been exerting pressure on Israel to reach a deal with Mr. Arafat's PLO. Now that such a deal, imperfect as it may be, has been reached, its viability is being challenged by those who refuse to abandon guns and dynamite; and its legitimacy is being questioned by some champions of the Palestinian cause in the West. This cannot serve as a stimulus to Israel's politically divided society to support

M. KAHIL



further agreements with the Palestinians. Faced with destitution and hopelessness in Gaza, and a Palestinian outcry for rapid political and economic improvement, it is hard to disagree with the case for an immediate move to a permanent solution, to help us overcome the impasse of desperation and terrorism. The concept of interim agreements has run its course; it must be superseded.

Not political realities may not allow this. Is the Rabin government, a desperately narrow coalition constantly losing popular support to the intransigent right, in a position at present to tackle such highly divisive issues as Jerusalem, the future of the settlements, the final borders, the 1948 refugees and the

permanent political status of the Palestinian lands? To address these issues now may be a recipe for bringing down the Rabin government, precipitating the coming to power of the right and possibly stopping dead the entire peace process. And that might be precisely the strategy of the rejectionist Palestinian front.

Throughout history, national movements have had to sacrifice unity, even at the price of civil strife, in order to reach the objective of independence and statehood. Zionism was no exception, and Mr. Arafat may have to face the same tragic dilemma sooner or later — if only to stave off a challenge to his own rule. Israel, too, will have to abandon the fallacy that

peace can be achieved through a wide national consensus. In this country, only wars, with the notable exception of the 1982 Lebanese adventure, unite, peace, paradoxically, is a divisive endeavour, for it requires so many painful compromises that consensus is simply unattainable. The test of leadership, then, is its capacity to opt for the daring decision, even at the price of political perdition.

Another fallacy is the neo-colonialist approach that seeks salvation for the Palestinians only through economic development and foreign investments. Important as they are, these can never be a substitute for political rights and national dreams. It is now fair to say that economic cooperation

in Oslo, for the first time in the history of their cruel conflict, Israelis and Palestinians started to share a common ethos of peace. Mr. Arafat, the embodiment of our past nightmares, the principal object of our abhorrence throughout the years, walks in our midst, and the earth does not shake. Not only are we tired of the bloody conflict, but also of the war of images that accompanied and fuelled it. As for the Palestinians, Mr. Rabin, the quintessential representative of Israel's military establishment, is now their most reliable partner for peace.

The writer is head of the Morris E. Curiel Centre for International Studies at Tel Aviv University. This article is reprinted from The Independent.

Islam — the 'new enemy'

By Haim Baram

The Oslo agreement has failed to bring the peoples of the Middle East any closer, despite the pompous ceremonies and drastically premature allocation of Nobel Peace Prizes to the manifestly undeserving protagonists, Messrs. Rabin, Peres, and Arafat. The old hatred has not subsided, but Mr. Arafat and his friends have become a tolerated necessity in Israel. Israeli leaders and journalists pour a tremendous amount of scorn on Mr. Arafat, and at best grant him the reputation of a survivor, but even this dubious compliment is uttered reluctantly.

The feared and respected enemy now is Islam; the demonisation of Muslims is part of the same propagandist strategy reserved until recently for Palestinian nationalism. The Likud leader, Bibi Netanyahu, is currently touring the globe and spreading the new gospel. According to Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Arafat has become completely unimportant, since he cannot possibly stem the tide of Islamic radicalism generated by Iran. It is an almost risible tactic, since the Likud leader himself described Mr. Arafat, until recently, as the principal threat not only to Israel, but also to the entire Western world.

Mr. Netanyahu has found a new line of reasoning for his ancient rejectionist stance. Mr. Arafat does not matter, the Islamists are going to take over from him and rule the Palestinian people, and therefore any territorial concessions are absolutely pointless. Iran, ironically, is portrayed as the great Satan, capable of threatening the West with nuclear bombs. Lebanon and even Syria will undergo an Islamic revolution pretty soon, their uneasy flirtation with the Americans will end and Israel will regain its status as a main strategic asset of the West. Therefore the pressure on Israel

to make territorial concessions will also cease. The number of Israelis who are ready to inhale this nonsense is unbelievable. A U.S. TV film depicting the "Islamic threat" inside the U.S. was screened in Israel Nov. 22, provoking tremendous public outcry and even pseudo-intellectual debate. The ground is ready and fertile, the anti-peace demonstrations in Gaza leave their mark, the terrorists are feared and hated. And all of them are now from the Islamist groups.

Will Mr. Netanyahu succeed in turning his dubious play into a potent weapon in the 1996 general elections? This is indeed a possibility. The old game of scare-mongering is returning to the Israeli political arena; only the enemy has put on a new attire. The Hamas fighters are motivated by Iran, Israeli "concessions" lead nowhere, and the best policy is to cling to "Eretz Yisrael". This is new politics geared to the same old goals, and the omens are bad.

If this policy of scare-mongering was confined only to Likud circles, it could be dismissed as an act of premature electioneering by Netanyahu. Unfortunately, Mr. Rabin himself has adopted a similar line of reasoning, especially in his frequent visits to Washington. The "Islamic peril" is one of Mr. Rabin's most tiresome themes, and the aim of his campaign is obvious. An ardent cold war anti-communist all his adult life, he hopes to convince the Americans that Iran is posing the same threat as Moscow in the good old days.

Even Professor Avishai Margalit, a prominent supporter of the government, accused Mr. Rabin in Maariv on Nov. 28 of playing with fire. Mr. Rabin and Mr. Netanyahu were a "pair of pyromaniacs," he said.

Middle East International.

LETTERS

Hope for life

To the Editor:

"What do you have to do with it?" asked the consul's assistant, confused.

"I work for Al-Amal Cancer Centre," I said, "and we've adopted Tahani's case. We are the ones who found her a hospital to give her the bone marrow transplant."

"Yes, but what are you getting out of it?" he asked, still not sure why I was there pleading on behalf of a 10-year-old girl for a visa to the United States, so she could go get a bone marrow transplant.

"Nothing, we're not in this for anything, except helping this cancer patient find a hospital that will do the operation for her, at their own expense," I explained.

He finally began to get the picture.

Like many people in Jordan, this man had no concept of the various roles Al Amal Cancer Centre is being built to take on. He had no notion that even though the centre itself is not yet operational, its work has already begun and its fight against cancer commenced.

When Tahani Huniti and her father came to Al Amal Cancer Centre about three months ago, and Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib asked me to start writing to cancer centres and oncology specialists we had contacts with to try and find her a sponsor. I must confess I was a little sceptical of ever finding a centre that would be willing to receive a foreign patient with acute lymphocytic leukaemia (ALL) and perform a \$100,000 operation for her, for free!

It was a pity, I thought to myself, especially since she already had a perfectly matching donor, her mother. If Al Amal Cancer Centre had been finished, Tahani could have had the operation here, and it would have been funded by the centre's poor patient fund.

Sweden, in Saudi Arabia, not to mention the letters we distributed to the 300 doctors who attended the 8th Jordanian Medical Conference held in Amman this past October. The more time passed, the more apologies we received, the more Tahani's morale dropped, and the more determined we became.

Whenever Tahani was in too much pain from her medication, she would beg her father to take her to see Dr. Khatib, who represented her only chance. It used to put a lump in my throat to see this man, who knew fully well the anguish of losing a daughter to leukaemia, crush the pain he felt every time he saw Tahani — because she reminded him all he could do to raise her spirits and give her hope and renew her faith.

I had never received a call from the office asking for me at home before. That's why on Nov. 22, at 7:30 in the evening, I was startled when I heard Abu Jamal (Dr. Khatib) screaming: "They've accepted her!" (Every one at the office knew about Tahani, and was anxious for her, even the night guard). I ran to the office and found Dr. Khatib, sitting at my desk, with an uncharacteristic smile on his face.

"Dr. Razzouk from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis just called," he told me. "He will send you a fax tomorrow confirming their willingness to handle Tahani's operation and its medical cost. See what you can do about getting them a visa as soon as possible."

Only God the Almighty can give life, but in every and any way it can Al Amal Cancer Centre will always do its best to give those who need it the hope... in more ways than one.



Dina Anton Ra'ad,
Al Amal Cancer Centre,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Features

Majali: No return to past

(Continued from page 1)

the hard way that providing the basic elements for any form of unity is not enough, but rather the people of concerned parties should have the final say.

I am aware of some views which claim that Jordan's refusal to deal with the issue of confederation is caused by its refusal to accept an independent Palestinian entity. Of course such claims are false. Jordan has always demanded and stressed the necessity to enable Palestinians to decide their own future.

The concept of confederation is not new. I personally remember that in the '70s I prepared a paper on the "United Arab Kingdom", which was very similar to the concept of confederation. Back then, the idea was not accepted by the Palestinian side as they believed that it would affect their aspiration to establish a future Palestinian state.

This leads me to discuss the elements needed by both sides to prepare (for positive future ties). First of all we need cooperation which would prepare us to face the requirements of peace, and which would guarantee accomplishing our common interest, in regard to both the regional and international challenges.

We have to note that Jordan and the Palestinian authority have been proceeding with the peace process at the same time. The Palestine Liberation Organisation signed the declaration of principles on 13 September 1993, while we have signed the common agenda on 14 September 1993. Jordan has signed the peace treaty after five months of the May 4 Cairo agreement. Due to the Cairo agreement and the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, a lot of work with Israel remains to be done. While the Palestinian authority is negotiating with Israel to fulfill its rights, to practice its sovereignty in order to complete the structure of its authority, Jordan is negotiating with Israel to restore its rights and to organise bilateral relations on an equal basis like any two states enjoying full sovereignty.

This highlights the importance of agreement between Jordan and the Palestinian authority on many current issues that cannot be postponed. Other issues that remain to be dealt with also concern Israel and Egypt, as well as other Arab states. Jordan must reach an agreement with the Palestinian authority on the issue of displaced persons. Jordan has accepted to postpone the matter until the final negotiations have begun. Nevertheless, this issue has a sizeable impact on demographics in both Jordan and Israel, and extends to Egypt as well. The three Arab parties should be able to come to a common agreement before the meetings of the quadripartite committee with Israel. As for the (1948) refugees, it is the most crucial issue which both Jordanian and Palestinian parties should begin tackling right away. Negotiations on this issue will relate directly to Israel, and may be related to the rest of the international community within the peace process. There are other sides concerned with the issue of refugees within the transitional stage that should be tackled. For example in the issue of UNRWA moving to Gaza, we have to make sure that an institution like that maintains its work towards the rights of the refugees.

As to economic coordination between Jordan and the PNA, which is very important, we know that the Palestinians have reached accords with the Israelis in Paris on 29 April 1994 and again under the Cairo agreement of 4 May 1994. The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, on the other hand, included paragraphs whose aim is to reach bilateral agreements. The Palestinian National Authority and the Jordanian government will both find themselves entering economic arrangements with Israel while they have not yet reached agreement between themselves. Why?

There have been several attempts to establish an economic relationship on strong bases. We have also worked to maintain this tie within the outline of the Jordanian-Israeli negotiations in order to support an independent Palestinian economy, separate from Israel's, and to forge a partnership with Jordan which would be beneficial to both sides. To Jordan the improvement in and independence of the Palestinian economy will be beneficial to the Jordanian economy itself. I do not want to go through

the reasons that have hindered us from completing our economic talks, even though we are on track in the fields of banks and monetary systems. But there remains an urgent need to define our economic relationship as a whole.

There are the regional dimensions that we should address together, especially in the economic field. There are two important elements in this regard. The first is that any new regional order has to take into account Jordan and the Palestinian territories. The second is that any relationship between Israel and Jordan cannot be forged without considering the link in between which is the West Bank.

Both the Jordanian government and the Palestinian authority should agree and organise their relations regarding the sectoral fields which will be transferred from Israel to the Palestinian National Authority. Such sectoral fields include education, health, legislation, property, taxes, and many others in which Jordan has also shown great flexibility towards our brothers, especially during the occupation.

We are all aware that Israel gives the issue of security a great importance. We may find that because of its security priorities, Israel finds it necessary not to give the Palestinians their rights. That has been clear in the Israeli policy towards the Palestinian labour force working in Israel, postponing withdrawal from Palestinian cities, and the limitations against the Palestinians to move freely in their territories. That is why the Jordanian and Palestinian sides are called upon to put in place a security scenario which would help both parties to negotiate in an atmosphere of stability.

Allow me to say that Jordan can never be an obstacle towards establishing a Palestinian authority or to accomplishing the dreams of the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, we occasionally hear statements claiming that Jordan, due to its historical relations with the Palestinian territories, seeks to deal with the Palestinian situation as it was during 1950-1967. Such claims are false. Jordan distinguished itself administratively from the West Bank and there is no reason for such Palestinian worry. The only way to restore the Palestinian rights over their land and to determine their own future is by ending the Israeli occupation in all its forms.

The basic aim of the negotiations is to achieve that goal. Due to Israeli ambitions beyond the peace process, and because of the complications during the past two decades, the Palestinian track was divided in two stages: transitional, and final. In Jordan we are aware of how difficult that separation has been and will be since the two stages cannot be clearly divided. But we believe that complications could be solved, and that the Israelis would eventually be convinced that inflexibility in accepting a comprehensive and just solution will only hinder their peaceful goals. Now we observe a change in their attitude. Such a thing was bound to happen due to the dynamic negotiating process, and because inflexibility only leads to more problems between both parties. The aim is to reach an agreement parallel to the Jordanian-Israeli treaty. By declaring the Israeli position for the Palestinian track, the region would be able to reach the hoped for peaceful aspects. If we assume that Israel is to reach by 1995 a peaceful solution with Syria and Lebanon, the success of such peace treaties will remain at a low ebb until the Palestinian people has accomplished its aspirations and aims.

As for Jerusalem, Jordan's position has always been clear in playing its role as a guardian of the holy places until the Palestinian National Authority is able to take over. With all due respect, this issue is not for the Islamic Summit to decide on. On the other hand, the Islamic Summit could contribute in funding Arab housing projects in Jerusalem or the maintenance of the holy shrines, and in making funds available to schools and industries. Our aim is to maintain the Arab identity of Jerusalem. Regarding the right of guardianship of the holy places, it remains not negotiable. Therefore we hope that our brothers would understand the situation and its reasons.

By Philip Sweeney

THE 18th annual Cairo Film Festival, which started last week, has a new prize to award this year. Dedicated to the Nobel Prize-winning novelist, Naguib Mahfouz, who was attacked with a knife by Muslim fanatics in October, it will go to the best film "calling for the abandonment of violence and terrorism and for liberty and equality."

It's a timely morale booster, because the film industry of the Arab World is firmly in the sights of the fundamentalists. In Egypt, the latest film by the country's most eminent director, Youssef Chahine, is currently the subject of a court action seeking to ban it for alleged profanity. In Algeria, many film-makers have joined the exodus of media people to France, Belgium, Tunisia, even England, over the past two years of intense violence.

"TV people were targeted because until recently all media were state-controlled and they were seen as representatives of the government," a young Algerian TV journalist, currently granted refugee status in London, told me. "A year ago, the director general of Algerian television was shot dead — and three more technicians this year. Many people like me are living clandestinely in Europe."

Tunisia's film festival, the Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage, precedes Carthage by two weeks and is a better showcase for Arab and African art film than the flashier, more international Cairo festival. Due to a well-entrenched tradition of secularism, a tough and ubiquitous police force, and hundreds of pre-emptive arrests, fundamentalism presents few public problems in Tunisia.

Much interest was generated by the Algerian director Merzak Allouache's film *Bab El Oued City*, which won second prize at Carthage. It depicts the ominous rise of the "bearded zealots of the Islamic Salvation Front" in the late 1980s. Worn down by incidents such as the anonymous delivery of a shroud and cake of mortuary soap to his house, the film's central character finally moves to France, and the director himself has done the same.

"Film cameras are targeted essentially by association with TV news cameras," says Allouache. "People have come up to me in the street, thrown coats over the camera

'Dangerous liaisons' — why Arab directors are being forced abroad



Scene from Allouache's *Bab El Oued City*

and said: 'No filming here.' Other crew have been told: 'This is your last warning.' So, as the fundamentalist murders move from liberal target to liberal target — a dentist with her throat cut, a pop singer shot in the head — Allouache has opted for safety.

The *Emigrant*, the latest film by Chahine, opened the Carthage festival, and immediately afterwards went on public showing in Tunis, where it attracted large crowds — as it has done in Egypt since its release. Starring the glamorous soap star Yusra, and Michel Piccoli in a voluminous Father Christmas beard, *The Emigrant* tells the epic story of a country boy's quest to bring his

tribe out of the desert into agricultural prosperity in Pharaonic Egypt. It is loosely based on the story of the Old Testament prophet Joseph, who is also revered in Islam, and this fact is at the root of Chahine's own brush with fundamentalism, at present non-violent, but still insidious. A month ago, a privately initiated court action sought to reverse the film's authorisation for public performance. The case is currently in abeyance while consideration is given to a defence move to have the judge changed.

Chahine, an urbane, charming and humorous man, was much in demand at Carthage, and I eventually

ran him to ground in his hotel room.

"When I wrote the first script of *The Emigrant*," he said, "I wanted to base it on the story of Joseph, which is very inspiring, very appropriate for the present time in Egypt where there is a lot of despair. I consulted professionals in religious affairs and they said I should not personalise a prophet... it's traditionally forbidden in Islam. I started thinking about why and eventually I realised when you read, your imagination creates the character according to your own ideas and tastes, but in cinema the director crystallises the character for you. So you may get a rejection by an

audience... I thought, even commercially it's not a very good idea to have a character the people will not identify with. So I was convinced, and I wrote a new script with a character named Ram and with a number of differences from Joseph."

Having obtained the appropriate authorisations for his new screenplay, including that of the government censor who accompanies the shoot demanding pointless little cuts, Chahine made *The Emigrant*, which came out at the end of September. Six weeks later, the writ was issued by a lawyer "pushed by some insignificant little journalist."

"I think it's the fact that

The Emigrant was such a blockbuster that triggered the affair," Chahine told me. "Put very simply, the fundamentalists don't like to see my film and come smiling — their philosophy is sad and grey; they feed people being as desperate as possible."

Is he apprehensive? "I'm taking precautions, basically I'm optimistic. I happen to believe in Egyptian justice, and 95 per cent of Egyptians don't believe in this extremism. Tomorrow still there. If you'll excuse sounding like Scari O'Hara."

The Independent.

Even at stodgy old Rolls-Royce, the times are changing

By Dirk Beveridge
The Associated Press

CREWE, England — Each time Dennis Jones finishes handcrafting a radiator for the front of a Rolls-Royce, he initials it with a double-D that looks something like a Texas cattle brand.

Once the Rolls-Royce is on the road, if the radiator requires repairs, it will return to Jones and he will fix it. It's his radiator, after all.

He dismisses a suggestion that a machine could do his work.

"It has to be done by hand to get its original design, finish and shape," said Mr. Jones, who has signed more than 5,000 radiators over the past quarter century.

This is the craftsmanship that makes Rolls-Royce the epitome of luxury for the world's super-rich. Who else could afford to shell out \$149,900 for a bottom-of-the-line Rolls-Royce silver dawn?

Or \$347,200 for a top-of-the-line limousine? But while the 90-year-old Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd. and its handmade cars are as quintessentially British as the queen and afternoon tea, its

manufacturing traditions have undergone a radical shakeup in recent years. And in a second revolution of sorts, Rolls-Royce's parent, Vickers Plc, is seeking a partnership with another, as-yet unidentified automaker.

The global recession, which hit Rolls-Royce buyers hard, forced the changes. The company's payroll was halved. Costs and production time fell dramatically with help from Japanese-style manufacturing practices. Some parts that used to be made by Rolls-Royce are now bought from other companies.

But the Rolls-Royce tradition is still apparent on every inch of its cars. Their leather seats are made from 10 to 12 hides per vehicle. Workers carefully match the leather before it is dyed. Then meticulously study each hide to decide where to cut each piece.

Trim for the carpeting is made from less-fine leather from around the cow's spine. But it must come from the same animals whose skin is used in the seats, to make an ideal match.

Of course, Rolls-Royce car

owners can have their own individual touches. One American customer insisted on shipping over hides he chose himself. A Scottish customer used tartans between cowhide panels.

Wooden interior panels are selected with care and cut precisely through the grain to make mirror images of patterns.

Customers can choose whatever items of comfort and extravagance they desire, like a fine-cut glass set for a back seat bar, or tiny televisions that fit into backs of the front seat headrests.

But such detail may not be enough. Auto analyst Nick Cunningham of the London Brokerage Barclays de Zoete Wedd believes Rolls-Royce needs to modernise its line that now is about 12 years old.

"They need to develop a new car," Mr. Cunningham said. "They need a new drive train. They need a new body and chassis, as well. Every year that passes, your vehicle gets older and it gets harder to sell to people."

That will require hundreds of millions of dollars, money

the company expects from its prospective partner.

In recent interviews, Rolls-Royce executives said no decision had been made about who the investor will be, playing down speculation by Mercedes-Benz will get the nod.

Talk of a partner for Rolls-Royce has stirred concerns in England that the company could be taken over. Just as the last big British-owned mass producer of cars, Rover, was purchased by BMW of Germany earlier this year. But Rolls-Royce insists it will still be Rolls-Royce.

Whatever form the partnership takes, it will force the automaker to adapt to the realities of the 1990s for a second time.

In the early part of the decade, Rolls-Royce had to contend with the worldwide economic bust. Although Rolls-Royce owners are often multimillionaires who tend to own more than one home and an average of five cars, it turned out they weren't recession-proof.

During the boom of the mid- and late 1980s, worl-

wide sales of Rolls-Royces and the company's Bentley line of cars soared from around 2,200 a year to a peak of 3,324 in 1990. But when the recession struck, sales plunged to 1,706 in 1991 and 1,375 in 1992, halving the company losses estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Rolls-Royce executives took a hard look at their business. They revamped the entire manufacturing system by creating Japanese-style teams that work closely with each other than being directed by middle managers.

"As a traditional management business, we didn't encourage people to use as much initiative as we should have," said Charles Matthews, managing director of operations. "The managers managed and the workers worked. We've eliminated much management. A lot of the management ideas are attributed to the Japanese; the other view is it's common sense."

One worker used to spend up to three days making a front seat for a Rolls-Royce. If he was working on a black

seat and the workers at next stage of production needed a tan seat, they would have to wait.

Now, seats are made in a day by three workers sharing the task. This way, they are much more responsive to the needs of colleagues to install the seats.

In all, Rolls-Royce made 4,500 changes. "They may be small individually, but the incremental effect is absolutely huge," Mr. Matthews said.

His remarks echo words of founder Henry Rolls that posted throughout the factory: "Small things make perfection, but perfection is no small thing."

The changes have allowed Rolls-Royce to cut the time of producing one car from days to 28 days. At any given time, 200 cars are in production pipeline, down from 600 four years ago. It enables Rolls-Royce to sell millions because expensive parts don't sit around for weeks or months.

They've also lowered the company's break-even point from 2,300 cars a year to 1,400.

Hidden hangings in Japan spark bitter row

By Eugene Moosa
Reuters

TOKYO — Imagine spending nine years on death row and then having only hours to prepare for your hanging.

That was how two murderers went to their deaths in Japan's first executions in a year.

The hangings last week set off an outcry against capital punishment and the secrecy with which criminals go to the gallows.

"Please come and pick up the body," said a telegramme

from Tokyo prison authorities to the stepfather of one of the hanged convicts, 44-year-old Yukio Ajima.

The Justice Ministry's long-standing policy is to make no public announcement or comment out of deference to the privacy of the families.

"It is our standing rule not to confirm or deny executions," a ministry spokesman said.

Ajima, convicted of the 1977 triple murder of his girlfriend, sister and aunt, exhausted his appeals in 1985. The other convict hanged

in northern Japan was Kazumi Sasaki, 66, who stabbed to death an innkeeper and passerby in 1984 while on parole. He was sentenced to death in 1985.

The twin executions, the first since November 1993, were a blow to the anti-capital punishment lobby, including a 103-member parliamentary group from all parties.

Before four people were hanged in November 1993, a four-year hiatus had raised the hope of human rights groups that Japan was effectively halting the death

penalty.

The latest executions came just five days after the prime minister's office issued the results of its survey saying 74 per cent of Japanese supported the death penalty.

The hangings were also carried out against a backdrop of rising violent crime in Japan, which has led senior police to warn that the country's society is under threat.

"These latest executions were politically timed," said Makoto Iwai, a spokesman for Amnesty International's Japan chapter. "We are also very frustrated at the

secrecy."

The Justice Ministry refuses to discuss why particular convicts are selected for execution. Nor are outside witnesses allowed to observe the hangings.

"It is absurd to argue that the Japanese people support the death penalty when the barbaric nature of judicial killing has been hidden from public scrutiny," Mr. Iwai said.

Mr. Iwai and the parliamentary group accused the Justice Ministry of arbitrarily selecting the two — 59 others are on death row and some

have waited longer than nine years — as a political message that Japan will carry out the death sentence.

"They not only make you wait for a very long time, Ajima's lawyer Junkichi Kuroda said, "they do not give any hints whatsoever about when your last day is dawn."

In the most recent account of a hanging in Japan, published last year by a retired warden who witnessed one in the 1960s, the convicted man had no idea his last day had arrived until several hours before hanging.

No economic role for Israel, Syrian oil minister says

AIRO (R) — Syria said Saturday it was premature to talk of economic relations with a predatory Israel as long as the Jewish state continued to occupy Arab territory.

Syrian Oil and Mineral Resources Minister Nadir Nabulsi told reporters after a meeting of Arab oil ministers in Cairo that the Arab states would first integrate with each other before they started talking about a Middle East market.

"We think that the term 'Middle East market' is against the Arab countries. It is domination of Israel over Arab resources, especially in the oil sector," he said.

"Talking about peace at the present time, when our territory is still occupied, is premature," he added.

His remarks echoed his speech in the brief open part of the meeting, where he also repeated Syria's position that it wanted a just, comprehensive and permanent peace including full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and other areas.

In his speech he said the Middle East market idea, much vaunted by the United States and other Western states, was a cover to tighten Israeli control over Arab wealth and to deprive the Arabs of their resources.

"We are working on a single Arab stand against what we now see in reality," he added later, referring to the economic fragmentation of the Arab World.

Mr. Nabulsi did not specify any projects he considered harmful to Arab interests, but OPEC members Egypt and Qatar are both studying the possibility of exporting natural gas to Israel.

Egypt says it will sell its gas to the Jewish state as long as such a project is economically viable. It is also studying projects for exports to the Palestinian territories and Jordan.

Qatar has ambitious plans to export gas from one of the biggest gas fields in the world.

Qatari Oil Minister Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah told reporters after the meeting that it did not take political considerations into account in its economic planning.

"We are obviously a gas producing country and we're interested in developing gas and in diversifying markets. We have concentrated on the South East Asian market. As for other markets, they obviously have to be economic and give economic advantages," he said.

"Economic projects are not treated from a political standpoint," he added.

The Qatari News Agency quoted Mr. Attiyah as saying in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation Friday that he supported Iraq's return to the oil market.

But, asked to confirm this shortly before the meeting opened, Mr. Attiyah said: "Did I say that?... no, someone was asking and this has become a very classical

answer that OPEC has decided, when Iraq comes to the market, to have an extraordinary meeting to discuss the situation."

All but one oil minister from OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain, Libya, Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Syria were present at the meeting. Libyan Minister Abdullah Al Badri pulled out at the last minute.

Iraqi Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad Al Habubi, whose country is still barred from exporting oil, said before the meeting he was sure United Nations trade sanctions would be relaxed next year to allow Iraqi oil exports back onto the market.

The ministers approved an OPEC budget of 1.361 million Kuwaiti dinars (\$4.54 million) for 1995, discussed joint projects, affiliated companies and institutions and agreed to extend for two years support for the Baghdad-based Arab Petroleum Training Institute.

Trade envoys fail to choose new WTO chief

GENEVA (R) — Major trading powers failed Friday to agree on who will be the first head of the new World Trade Organisation (WTO), despite high-level political contacts over the past few days, trade officials said.

But they pledged to try to reach a consensus so as to announce a choice among the three regional candidates by year-end.

Italy's former Trade Minister Renato Ruggiero — backed by the European Union (EU) — still leads the pack, ahead of former Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and South Korea's Trade Minister Kim Chul-su, according to unofficial scorecards.

Washington and Latin American countries strongly support Mr. Salinas, while Asian countries have lined up behind Mr. Kim in the race for the high-profile post available from Jan. 1.

Andras Szepesi, the Hungarian trade ambassador who is conducting behind-the-scenes consultations to choose the new WTO chief, told senior envoys certain progress had been made.

"But at the moment there is not yet a basis for a credible consensus around a successful candidate," he told top delegates.

Mr. Szepesi was speaking to an informal, private session held on the fringes of the two-day annual meeting of the 134 member states of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Trade envoys agreed Thursday that the WTO would be launched on Jan. 1, although the GATT will continue to coexist for a one-year transition period.

Peter Sutherland, director-general of the GATT whose contract runs to June 30, has refused to say whether he would stay on as caretaker WTO chief pending a final choice.

Jean-Pierre Leng, EU trade ambassador to the GATT, told reporters after Friday's session: "We continue to believe there will be a consensus by year-end."

He said it was regrettable that no consensus had emerged, adding: "We think it would be a bad signal not to have a director-general when the new WTO starts up in January."

Mr. Ruggiero commands a very large majority, according to the EU trade ambassador, who declined to give figures.

"A very large majority does not mean a consensus yet, but it could permit building a consensus around him," Mr. Leng added.

Clinton urges hemispheric 'partnership for prosperity'

MIAMI (R) — President Clinton launched a pan-American trade summit Friday by calling for a new "partnership for prosperity" in the western hemisphere involving the free flow of goods from Alaska to Argentina.

In a speech to Florida political and civic leaders and others who helped organize the summit, Mr. Clinton said expanded trade was the key to freedom and economic opportunity for all the peoples of the Americas.

But he drew his loudest applause and only standing ovation when he referred to Cuba, the only nation in the hemisphere with a non-democratically elected leader — Fidel Castro — and the only U.S. neighbour not represented in Miami.

"We support the Cuban people's desire for peaceful democratic change. And we hope by the next time we have one of these summits... a democratic Cuba will take its place at the table of nations," Mr. Clinton said.

The U.S.-sponsored summit of 34 North and South American nations is the first gathering of its kind since 1967, when then-president Lyndon Johnson met other hemisphere leaders in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

Mr. Clinton proposed it as part of an administration effort to change the focus of U.S. foreign policy from the security-first stress of the cold war era to a new emphasis on economic growth resulting from trade and investment.

It is intended to build on the success of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has led to vastly increased commerce between the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Taking a veiled jibe at independent political leader Ross Perot, an outspoken opponent who claimed NAFTA would lead to a mass exodus of U.S. jobs, Mr. Clinton said "there has been no giant sucking sound, except for American goods going across the border."

"History has given the peoples of the Americas a dazzling opportunity to build a community of nations committed to the values of liberty and the promise of prosperity," he said. "Now, over the next three days, the 34 democratically-elected leaders of our hemisphere will gather to begin to seize this opportunity."

Mr. Clinton said he and the other leaders would talk about how to lower trade barriers, strengthen democratic institutions and improve the quality of life throughout the hemisphere.

U.S. officials said the meeting was expected to produce agreement in principle to create a free trade zone throughout the hemisphere by the end of the next decade.

It was also expected to bring agreement to cooperate in fighting corruption, terrorism and narcotics trafficking, they said.

"If we're successful," Mr. Clinton said, "the summit will lead to more jobs, opportunity and prosperity for our children and the generations to come."

"We will have launched a new partnership for prosperity," he said.

U.S. sales to other countries in the hemisphere, including Latin America, Canada and the Caribbean

nations, totalled about \$160 billion in 1993, 38 per cent of all U.S. sales abroad.

Administration officials say U.S. exports to Latin America alone accounted for 1.3 million jobs last year, and produced a trade surplus of more than \$4 billion.

Mr. Clinton's effort to eliminate all trade barriers from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America is not universally popular within his Democratic Party.

In a nine-page letter to the president this week, the Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, Richard Gephardt, called on him to keep environmental, labour and other issues at the forefront when negotiating with his Latin American counterparts.

Mr. Gephardt, calling the November elections that turned control of the House and Senate over to the Republicans "a wake-up call," said voters "told us that we had strayed from recognizing what our priority must be: Improving the economic lives of working people."

"We must do all we can to ensure that we do not have another NAFTA-like debate that divides the Democratic Party," he said.

Mr. Clinton was expected to face criticism from some Latin leaders for the rising anti-immigrant tide in the United States as symbolised by the success of proposition 187 in California.

That measure, which would deny educational and medical benefits to illegal immigrants, was overwhelmingly approved in last month's mid-term election despite Mr. Clinton's staunch opposition.

Japan combats strong yen in push for 2.5% growth next year — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — Japan, a country in profound change, struggling hard against the effects of the yen to emerge from recession with growth of 2.5 per cent next year, an OECD report has showed.

The government must juggle ahead quickly with deflation in the interests of Japanese consumers as well as domestic and foreign producers, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said.

"This was 'essential' and might require a 'different' approach based on creation of a 'powerful independent organisation,' as suggested by the so-called Hirawa report, to keep pressure on ministries, the OECD suggested.

"But big packages to stimulate the economy had caused substantial deterioration of government finances."

The central and local government deficits had risen by 10 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1993, and expected to rise by 16 per cent in 1994 to 17.6 per cent of GDP.

The restructuring of companies and rise of the yen had prolonged the recession — and in 1993 "the growth of exports fell significantly" and Japanese firms "continued to lose international competitiveness."

Japanese exporters had reduced export prices by eight per cent to absorb two thirds of the rise of the yen, so the share of Japanese exports in world trade in current prices had continued to increase and import penetration fell to less than it had been at the peak in 1990.

Hence the current account surplus in yen fell only slightly last year and the trade surplus in dollars rose.

But in the first half of 1994 "the volume of goods imports rose rapidly, ensuring a marked increase in the openness of the Japanese markets."

The trade surplus, which had risen to \$131.4 billion in 1993 from \$117.6 billion in 1992, would fall slightly to \$128.8 billion this year and again to \$120.1 billion next year.

Inflation would fall to 0.6 per cent this year and then to 0.4 per cent next year from 1.0 per cent in 1993 and 1.6 per cent in 1992.

But the rate of unemployment, which had been 2.2 per cent in 1992, would rise to 2.5 per cent in 1993, 2.9 in 1994 and 3.0 per cent in 1995.

After two years of recession, the economy had shown signs of bottoming out in the first half of this year and appeared to have begun a "gradual recovery", but a rise of the yen might "force companies to restructure their balance sheets further."

The recovery would probably not take Japan to the high growth rates of the last decade, but one way of achieving "significant gains in living standards" would be to reform further the law and reform applying to land.

Prices remained "exceptionally high" and housing conditions in Japan were not so good as in other OECD countries. Reform would promote investment in housing thereby reducing the external surplus.

The 119-page report referred repeatedly to the changes wrought on the economy by the rise of the yen, warning that "the major risk to the emerging recovery is the value of the yen."

It said: "So far, in addition to reducing employment in the exposed sector, companies' response to the rising

yen has been to move production overseas and increase purchases of imported components."

But "a stronger yen would probably result in further losses of export market shares."

The OECD increased its forecast for growth this year to 1.0 per cent from 0.8 per cent in June, mainly because of firm consumer demand and an easing of monetary policy.

The discount rate is at a record low point of 1.75 per cent. This had helped banks to strengthen their finances, but although the problem of bad loans was no longer deteriorating, "it will take some time before the banks return to a more healthy financial position."

But the four packages to boost the economy by 10 per cent of GDP were expected to drive up gross debt to 83 per cent of GDP by 1995, "markedly above the OECD average". Although the net situation was stronger, Japan faced "huge future pension commitments" because the population was ageing.

Ministers had to ensure that there was no "loss of control over government deficits in the medium term."

Exports lift Canadian economy

OTTAWA (AFP) — A continuing export boom combined with a five-year high in company profits helped Canada's economy grow by more than one per cent in the third quarter, the government has reported. Statistics Canada pointed out, however, that virtually all of the growth was recorded in August while it was unchanged in September. The government agency said, overall, the Canadian economy grew at an annual rate of 4.7 per cent in the third quarter of this year, a sharp slowdown compared to the second quarter growth rate of 6.7 per cent. Analysts said the latest figures indicated that the Canadian economy would round out the year with a growth rate of at least four per cent.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1994
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: There are no exact aspects today so you may want to turn to handling your practical affairs which can go smoothly as long as you don't appear to be too self-seeking. Make phone calls early to dispel tensions.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid tension in the outside world, and get busy keeping promises you have made to others. Come to a better understanding with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you depend more on an outside partner, you can handle difficult situations very easily, so don't run off on a tangent of some sort.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Keep busy at tasks and you come out on top, but be sure you don't take on additional expenses. Don't lose your temper around loved ones.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Avoid an irate partner today and enjoy yourself. Concentrate on pleasures you want to enjoy with close friends. Show that you have poise and tact.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Forget tasks which are annoying, enjoy the long-term pleasures at home with your loved ones and relieve tension. Catch up on worthwhile reading.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day to find the right solution to whatever has been mystifying to you for a long time. Make a copy of whatever you write.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is an ideal day to concentrate on money and property matters. Get advice from an older person about a new endeavour. State your mind clearly.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Rely on your experiences of the past for the solution to today's problems. Don't waste time with those who gossip and spread your secrets.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Discuss a project with an expert before going on with it any further. Your mate can help to make your life much easier in the future.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are not thinking quite straight now, not a good friend can be helpful, so listen to the advice given to you at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be most efficient at handling outside activities since they can bring in fine benefits. Enjoy some hobby in the evening with close friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Try a different route where some difficult situation is concerned, and get good results. Avoid an irate friend who is out for blood.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

Save water... Every drop counts!

eanuts



Andy Capp



lutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DEGAL
REQUE
GLEMIT
BOLIFE

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: VERVE VITAL HECTIC TARGET
Answer: Why magnets are found on refrigerators — THEY'RE ATTRACTIVE

THE Daily Crossword

by James E. Hinish, Jr.

ACROSS
1 Swift current
5 Serious
10 Army name; abbr.
14 Author Palao
15 Churchgoer
16 Eight Se
17 Unlikely circumstances
18 Algebran port
20 Twisting
21 boy
22 Title
24 Service period
26 Country's victim
27 Money, for one
29 Catcher's
30 Servers
32 European poet
34 Move fast
35 Reddest
36 Country lines
37 Service (consultation)
38 Yuting
39 Lit.
40 Attorney general
41 Rano
42 Indian ceremonial feast
43 NSA team
44 Kitchen cupboard
45 Shoestrings
46 App's in the Family
48 Self-prf.
49 Start
50 Word with Free or Yesterday
53 Carpenter's ram
54 He was
55 Hopalong
57 Venetian
58 Althebert run
59 Victory
60 Titles
61 Sacred image

DOWN
1 Great number
2 Ja
3 Sallenger tale
4 Inevitable; abbr.
5 Grab
6 Tith
7 Ancient chest
8 Got a
9 Sand off; var.
10 Money
11 Accommodate
12 expecting a return favor
13 Riverbank steps
14 Sound
15 Device in secret
16 Money
17 Puff
18 Medium
19 Trap
20 Target Aleut
21 Foot oil
22 Order to file
23 Sorry
24 David's food
25 Translation piece
26 Swedish rock group
27 Entrench
28 Church calendar
29 Next Sea port
30 City
31 Seal

Jordan Soccer League

Al Hussein regain lead; Al Jeel celebrate 1st win

By Aileen Bannayan

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The top four teams exchanged standings over the weekend as the Jordan Soccer League resumed its action.

Al Hussein regained the lead by winning 4-1 over Al Ramtha in the first round of the league.

Al Jeel scored their first win in the competition by defeating Shabab Al Hussein 2-1.

Al Hussein's 4-1 victory improved their standing to first place, while Al Jeel moved up to fourth place.

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struggle to advance their standing and improve their position in the league.

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Although the win is not likely to help Al Jeel in avoiding relegation, Shabab Al Hussein's chances of staying in the first division will definitely be hurt as they are unable to improve their standing.

Shabab Al Hussein's top scorer Maher Sarsour scored his team's only goal in the first minute of the match, only to be stunned by an equalising goal by Al Jeel's Zakariya Al Shibel six minutes later.

Shabab Al Hussein were the better team and had more chances throughout the match. They were therefore upset when their opponents netted their second goal in the 87th minute to clinch their first victory.

Al Qadissieh scored their third win of the competition and added an important two points to their standings when they overcame Kufroum 2-1.

Al Qadissieh, who were a top five team last year, disappointed their fans when they languished in 9th place for most of the competition before moving up to eighth in the final week of the first round.

Their win will therefore raise their morale as they seek to move away from the grim last four.

Kufroum, a newcomer to the division whose impressive results at first enabled them to remain in a halfway position, were the first to score by striker Islam Diyab in the 13th minute.

Al Qadissieh equalised late in the 51st minute and added their winning goal in the final five minutes.

Standings after 12th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Hussein	12	9	2	1	34	11	20
Wihdat	12	8	4	—	14	3	20
Ramtha	12	7	4	1	22	5	18
Faisali	12	6	5	1	22	7	17
Jazireh	12	7	2	3	16	8	16
Ahli	12	4	4	4	14	15	12
Kufroum	12	5	1	6	20	23	11
Qadissieh	12	3	4	5	14	19	10
Arabi	12	3	2	7	13	25	8
Shabab Al Hussein	12	1	3	8	16	28	5
Karmel	12	1	2	9	9	30	4
Jeel	12	1	1	10	8	28	3

Yria, Iraq escape world bans

ALALUMPUR (R) — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) declared an amnesty Saturday against alleged age-cheats after X-ray evidence was ruled inconclusive by world ruling body FIFA.

The X-rays, which determine age by analysing bone growth, strongly suggested both teams fielded over-age players in Jakarta, according to the AFC.

"We have been advised by FIFA that the X-ray evidence we compiled was not suitable to be used as a foundation of guilt," said AFC general-secretary Peter Velappan.

He added that the amnesty would be "absolutely the last chance" for Asian football teams.

Players in Jakarta, according to the AFC.

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Players in Jakarta, according to the AFC.

Agassi fined \$6,000 for Grand Slam outburst

MUNICH (Agencies) — World No. 2 Andre Agassi was fined \$6,000 Saturday for firing a volley of obscenities at the umpire during his losing quarter-final at the Grand Slam Cup.

Agassi swore in the first set of his match against Sweden's Magnus Larsson after a line call went against him, earning a warning for an audible obscenity.

He then swore again in frustration and was penalised a point which cost him his service game and set a discouraged Agassi on his way to losing the match.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) referees fined him \$2,000 for the audible obscenity, and a further \$4,000 for verbal abuse.

Matters could have been worse. Agassi said he had in fact sworn aloud a third time, but the umpire chose to disregard the offence for which the automatic penalty would have been a default and presumably an even stiffer fine.

There was also a \$1,000 fine for Goran Ivanisevic for an ill-tempered outburst at the umpire during his winning quarter-final against Boris Becker.

Ironically, Ivanisevic is technically suspended for two months by the Association of Tennis Professionals for accumulating more than \$10,000 of fines this year — but is playing in Munich because the ITF runs the event and has chosen to overlook the suspension.

Aside from ruffled pride, the fines will not significantly dent either player's earnings here.

Agassi took home \$500,000 including a \$250,000 bonus for being U.S. Open champion, and Ivanisevic was assured of \$425,000 even if he lost the semifinal against world number one Pete Sampras.



World No. 2 Andre Agassi

mouth and they are, in a sense, waiting for you to say something."

He also argued that, given the chances of abusive language being picked up by television, court-side microphones should be removed.

"If they don't want the people to hear it on the TV, then get the microphones off the court."

Agassi admitted he was ruled by his emotions.

"Of course it's better if you don't swear. But it's human and sometimes it's impossible to do anything else."

"He gave me a warning for an obscenity. I mean, obscenity is going on a lot. And I just think that a lot of times these guys don't make the right call because they are looking straight at your

"The reality is, it (swearing) happens, and because it happens, I don't think there should be as many microphones on the court."

On the next point, Agassi's service return just missed the umpire's chair. The public laughed and Agassi apologised to the umpire.

"I did not do it on purpose. It was a really bad shot, really bad," he said. No one was fooled, but the umpire appeared to accept Agassi's explanation.

Agassi fought back in style in the second set, making superb returns despite Larsson's lightning serves.

Larsson, world-ranked 19th, won 6-3, 1-6, 6-0 to line up a semi-final with another American, Todd Martin, who beat French Open champion Sergi Bruguera 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

By contrast, Martin's match against Bruguera was a placid affair, with both players maintaining their service game in the first set until the American led 5-4.

The Spaniard promptly cracked under the pressure of the \$6 million tournament, handing his opponent both set point and the set with two consecutive double faults.

The second set went a tie-break, with the American's sheer power breaking the deadlock between the two men.

Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic and world number one Pete Sampras will meet in the other semi-final.



Pau Ortiz' Frederic Guinol (centre) scores for his team during the basketball match against Birex Verona (AFP photo)

Real Madrid, Olympiakos lead European basketball standings

LONDON (R) — Italy's Pesaro joined Real Madrid at the top of Group A with a narrow 86-85 victory in Moscow while in an all-Greek clash Panathinaikos beat Paok Salonika 72-63, in the men's European Champion Clubs' Cup semifinal basketball series.

In Group B in Leverkusen, Bayer Leverkusen of Germany beat Joventut Badalona of Spain 53 (37-20).

Leading scorers: Bayer Leverkusen — Abdul Deem 25, Thomas Garrick 17.

Joventut Badalona — Rafael Jofresa 14, Ebeling 14.

In Barcelona: Cibona Zagreb of Croatia beat Barcelona of Spain 74-70.

STANDINGS

Group A

	P	W	L	Pts.
Real Madrid (Spain)	5	4	1	9
Pesaro (Italy)	5	4	1	9
Panathinaikos (Greece)	5	3	2	8
CSKA Moscow (Russia)	5	3	2	8
Paok Salonika (Greece)	5	2	3	7
Olympia Ljubljana (Slovenia)	5	2	3	7
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel)	5	2	3	7
Benfica (Portugal)	5	0	5	5

Group B

	P	W	L	Pts.
Olympiakos (Greece)	5	4	1	9
Barcelona (Spain)	5	3	2	8
Bologna (Italy)	5	3	2	8
Istanbul (Turkey)	5	3	2	8
Limoges (France)	5	3	2	8
Cibona Zagreb (Croatia)	5	3	2	8
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany)	5	1	4	6
Joventut Badalona (Spain)	5	0	5	5

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GOREN BRIDGE

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KILL THE ENTRY

Neither vulnerable West deals.

NORTH

32

AQJ10854

1076

WEST

AS

KQ1097

AJ854

K7

983

QJ82

83

SOUTH

KQ7542

6

AK43

The bidding:

West North East South

1: 3: 3: 4:

5: Pass Pass 5:

Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of V

A long suit in dummy can cause

anxiety in the heart of even the

stoutest defender. One way to try to

neutralise the threat is to attack the

side entries to the suit. The suit

might even be neutralised when

there are no side entries.

After North's preemptive jump

overall, South decided to compete

at the five-level despite the advice

that it belongs to the opponents.

Had South chosen to double, North-

South would have collected 500

points. But then there would have

been no tale to tell.

With routine defense, the con-

tract would probably avoid home.

Suppose West leads the king of

hearts and continues the suit for

declarer to ruff. A low spade is led.

West follows low and dummy's ace

wins. Declarer can no longer be

defeated.

After returning to hand with the

king of clubs, declarer forces out the

ace of trumps. Thanks to a double-

ton king of diamonds outside, declar-

er will be able to get two club

discards on the diamonds.

When this hand was played in a

team match, Dr. George Rosen-

kranz of Mexico City held the West

hand. The play to the first two

tricks went as described, but when

declarer led a low trump, West flew

up with the ace and shifted to a low

diamond!

Declarer's fate was sealed. With-

out a second diamond in hand, there

was no longer any way to reach

dummy. After successfully finessing

the ten of diamonds, declarer was

able to discard one club on the ace,

but even though the king dropped,

there was no second discard. West

was able to ruff the third diamond to

complete a one-trick set.

Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan
Santa all the way from Finland

FOR THE first time of the History of Christmas festivities and on the invitation of Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan, British Airways, Al Ahlia Abella SuperStores and Pepsi, Santa Claus is visiting Jordan to take part of the Holy season festivities.

Arriving on December 12th on British Airways London-Amman route all the way from the Town of Rovaniemi which lies on the Arctic circle in Finland. Every year, children from all over Scandinavia and indeed much further afield travel to see him and his reindeer to tell him their Christmas wishes and ask him to personally sign Christmas cards for their loved ones.

Santa, and during his stay in Amman will join the children of Jordan celebrating Christmas, he will visit Charity organisations and will take part of the children Christmas party and perform the switching on of the Christmas tree on

December 15th in the afternoon at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan. In the afternoon of Wednesday the 14th of December, he will have an appearance at Al Ahlia Abella Super Stores.

Your child will have the opportunity to present a card for Santa to take with him to the children of Scandinavia from the children of Jordan, and have the chance to win a mother and child return ticket Amman-London-Amman on British Airways and a four nights stay at a Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan.

There will be opportunities to have souvenir photographs taken of your child posing along side the famous man with the characteristic long white beard and flowing red robes.

This activity is one of many Hotel Inter-Continental plans in collaboration of local companies and societies in his efforts to cement his relationship with the local communities.

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Outburst

"The reality is, it (swearing) happens, and because it happens, I don't think there should be any more suspensions on the court," said the referee. "I did not do it on purpose. It was a really bad shot, really bad." No one was asked, but the referee appeared to accept Agassi's explanation.

Agassi fought back in style in the second set, making up for his first set loss with a lightning serve.

Larsson, who ranked 11th, won 6-3, 6-6, 6-0 to tie up a semi-final with another American, Todd Martin who beat French Open champion Andre Agassi 6-4, 7-6 (5).

By contrast, Martin's match against Burger was a hard affair, with both players maintaining their service game in the first set until the American led 3-2.

The Spaniard promptly cracked under the pressure of the 30 million tournament, handing his opponent both set point and the set with two consecutive double faults.

The second set went a tie-break, with the American's sheer power breaking the deadlock between the two men.

Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic and world number one Pete Sampras will meet in the other semi-final.

BRIDGE

ENTRY

When the time comes, there will be a lot of people who will be looking for a job. This is a very important time for the country. We need to be prepared for the future. We need to be able to handle the challenges that are ahead of us. We need to be able to work together and to support each other. We need to be able to face the future with confidence and with a sense of purpose.

Fluential Jordan from Finland

The fluential Jordan from Finland is a very important part of the country's history. It is a part of the country's identity and it is a part of the country's future. We need to be able to work together and to support each other. We need to be able to face the future with confidence and with a sense of purpose.

ORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities in the world. There are many ways to make a difference. There are many ways to help others. There are many ways to make the world a better place. We need to be able to work together and to support each other. We need to be able to face the future with confidence and with a sense of purpose.

Jordan Handball Championship 2nd leg of competition kicks off with vital win for Hussein Irbid

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The second leg of the Jordan handball championship kicked off Friday at the Al Hassan Sport City in Irbid with a striking win for the Al Hussein-Irbid 32-27 against Amman while Al Ahli upset Yarmouk Al Shouneh 30-25.

Al Hussein captured the win over Amman who attended with only 7 players and no substitute. Amman took the lead in the first half 16-14.

Al Hussein led the second half leaving Amman's defence in chaos to lead for the first time 25-24.

Amman played the rest of the match with five players after the referee sent out Ahmad Gaboun.

Al Hussein took advantage of the situation and ended the match 32-27.

Al Ahli 30, Yarmouk Al Shouneh 25: Al Ahli played in a very organised way depending on the wings in getting through Al Shouneh's defence to end the first half 15-12.

Al Shouneh tried to stop Al Ahli's attacks but to no avail. Al Ahli's goal keeper Mahmoud Abdul Hameed prevented his opponents from altering the result and gave his team a push to create more chances and end the match with an important win.

Eight teams are participating in the championship. Here is a look at the first leg results.

Al Arabi are in the lead with 12 points. They surprised all the other teams after good preparations and results in the Um Al

Maarek Championship in Iraq. They are therefore fighting for the crown with Al Ahli, the title holders.

Al Ahli, came second with 10 points but had unstable performance. Players' over confidence gave the team a weak start.

Al Salt, led by their coach Karim Hadi, reached third place with 6 points — a good position for a team who lacked experience and heading for a new start.

Yarmouk Al Shouneh have 5 points. They won two matches, while losing three to finish fourth.

Amman who came second last year, appeared as a weak, unstable team in this year's championship and finished fifth. The reasons for their poor performance are lack of practice and the departure of coach Talal Abed Al Kareem who left the team in a chaos.

Al Hussein, with a new coach, need a lot of time and practice to reach the level of the other teams as this team consists of a number of good players with high ambitions.

Al Orthodoxi are a team lacking the experience which they hoped to get from our ex-national coach Nabil Shamroukh who recruited young faces in an

attempt to keep the team among the top group.

Al Barcha withdrew from the championship and the Jordan Handball Federation (JHF) accepted their decision.

In a meeting headed by Dr. Sari Hamdan the JHF announced the following decisions:

According to paragraph 3 article 5 of the penalties a decision was made to suspend Barcha's goalkeeper Mohammad Sharafat 12 consecutive matches.

To bar Barcha's Khaled Sababeh from attending matches for 2 years.

To accept the team's decision to withdraw because of financial problems and to cancel all its results.

A round up of some statistics of the First Leg

Penalties given 115 to all the participating teams distributed as follows: Arabi 12, Ahli 14, Salt 17, Amman 17, Hussein 16, Y. Shouneh 14, Orthodoxi 14 and Barcha 11.

Jihad Qaisat from Al Salt scored 74 goals to take first place as top scorer.

Al Orthodoxi's Modar Abed Kareem came second with 64 goals and Moufah Fateh Allah/Arabi and Mohammad Taha/Salt with 60 goals came third.

Standings after 1st leg

Teams	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Arabi	6	—	—	187	140	12
Ahli	5	—	1	214	150	10
Salt	3	—	3	171	171	6
Y. Shouneh	2	1	3	168	190	5
Amman	2	—	4	160	174	3
Hussein	1	1	4	160	174	3
Orthodoxi	1	—	5	157	203	2

Clippers ambush L.A. Lakers

NEW YORK (AP) — Could it be? The Los Angeles Clippers are on a roll?

After all, it took them 17 games to get their first victory, and even that win against the struggling Milwaukee Bucks — required a desperation jumper by Pooh Richardson in overtime.

But on Friday night, the Clippers ambushed the Lakers, beating them 109-84.

"We have a lot more confidence now," said Loy Vaught, who had 19 points and 15 rebounds. "We feel like we can beat any team in the league, and we felt that way before we even won a game."

Even if it was just across town, the Clippers got their first road victory since last April 5 and put together consecutive victories for the first time since March 8 and 15.

In other NBA games, it was Cleveland 96, Boston 89; Indiana 94, Philadelphia 88; and Portland 116, Golden State 107.

The Clippers started fast, jumping out to a 40-18 lead and holding the Lakers to their lowest first-half total of the season.

Vlade Divac added 21 points and a season-high 17 rebounds for the Lakers, while Pooh Richardson had 20 points and 10 assists for the Clippers.

Magic 110, Heat 96: Orlando routed Miami for the second time this season, building a 20-point lead in nine minutes and coasting past Miami.

Shaquille O'Neal led the Magic with 25 points. Antwan Davis added 24 points, including five 3-pointers.

Cavaliers 96, Celtics 89: John Williams scored a season-high 20 points to lead Cleveland over Boston.

The visiting Cavaliers snapped a three-game losing streak and won their third straight game in the Boston Garden.

Dominique Wilkins led Boston with 27 points, 14 in the first quarter.

Pacers 94, 76ers 88: Derrick McKey scored 15 points and Dale Davis had 14 points and a season-high 18 rebounds as

the Indiana Pacers defeated the Philadelphia 76ers for their fourth straight victory.

Jeff Malone had 17 points for Philadelphia, giving him a career total of 17,015 points. Malone became the 47th NBA player to go over 17,000 points.

Hawks 89, Knicks 85: Mookie Blaylock's 3-pointer broke a tie with 39 seconds remaining as Atlanta snapped New York's three-game winning streak.

Blaylock's basket gave the Hawks an 86-83 lead, and Grant long stretched it to 88-83 on two free throws with just under 25 seconds remaining.

Bulls 117, Pistons 96: B.J. Armstrong scored a season-high 22 points as the Chicago Bulls routed the Detroit Pistons, who were without their two leading scorers.

Joe Dumars missed the game with bronchitis, while Grant Hill had the flu and a sore left foot.

Scottie Pippen had 19 for Chicago, and Bill Wennington added 16 points and nine rebounds off the bench.

Lindsey Hunter and Oliver Miller led the Pistons with 18 points apiece, but injuries prevented both from finishing the game.

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1994's top sports stories Brazil's World Cup triumph voted No. 1

LONDON (AP) — In triumph and tragedy, 1994 was the year of Brazil in international sports.

In a worldwide poll of Associated Press subscribers, Brazil accounted for the top two sports stories of the year.

Brazil's World Cup soccer victory in the United States was voted the No. 1 story, followed closely by the death of Brazilian Formula One driver Ayrton Senna.

George Foreman's heavyweight championship, Diego Maradona's drug scandal and the slaying of Colombian soccer star Andres Escobar were the other top vote-getters.

News organisations in more than 30 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, Africa and South America took part in the survey. They listed their choice of the top 10 stories, and points were awarded on an inverse scale — ranging from 10 points for first place to one point for 10th.

No surprisingly, four stories connected to the World Cup made the top six.

Brazil's record fourth World Cup championship — decided in a history-making penalty shootout against Italy in the final received 15 first-place votes and garnered a total of 323 points.

Running a close second with 305 points, including 13 first-place votes, was Senna's death. The three-time Formula One champion was killed in a crash at the San Marino Grand Prix May 1, capping a horrific weekend in which Austrian driver Roland Ratzenberger also died at the wheel.

Tied for third place with 201 points were Foreman's knockout of Michael Moorer to become world



heavyweight champion at the improbable age of 45 — 20 years after he lost the title — and Maradona's ban for a positive drug test at the World Cup.

World Cup stories took the next two spots: The shooting death of Escobar in Medellin following his own-goal in Colombia's 2-1 loss to the United States (168), and the huge success of the cup in the soccer-aphetic United States (108).

China's overwhelming domination of the World Swimming Championships and Asians Games — and the subsequent spate of positive drug tests by Chinese athletes — was seventh with 96 points.

The Tonya Harding-Nancy Kerrigan saga, which dominated U.S. media attention before and during the Lillehammer Olympics, also attracted substantial international interest as it placed eighth with 79 points.

Spanish cyclist Miguel Indurain's fourth consecutive Tour de France victory was ninth with 67 points, while the exploits of West Indian cricket batsman Brian Lara — he set a world record test score of 375 against England — rounded out the top 10 with 65.

The retirement of tennis great Martina Navratilova, who reached the championship match in her final appearance at Wimbledon, was 11th with 60 points.

The labour strike which wiped out the U.S. baseball season and locked out the North American Ice Hockey League was 12th with 53 points, two points ahead of German driver Michael Schumacher edging out Damon Hill for the Formula One There was a tie for 14th with 44 points between Leroy Burrell's World record of 9.86 seconds in the 100 metres and soccer giant AC Milan's Italian and European Cup triumphs.

Rounding out the top 20 were: The Lillehammer Olympics and the domination of host Norway (33 points); teenage tennis star Jennifer Capriati's arrest on marijuana possession charges (32); Norwegian speedskater Johan Olav Koss's haul of three Olympic gold medals and three world records (31); Austrian skier Ullrich Maier's death in a downhill crash (27); and Nick Price's domination of men's golf with victories at the British Open and U.S. PGA Championship.

Americans Street, Lindh sweep downhill races

LAKE LOUISE, Canada (AFP) — Olympic silver medalist Picabo Street of the United States flashed to her first World Cup victory Friday, easily winning the first of two downhill scheduled here this weekend.

Her compatriot Hilary Lindh was second with Ger-

many's Katja Seizinger third.

Street completed the 2,639-metre course in a blistering 1 min 40.40 seconds, well ahead of Lindh who clocked 1:41.16; Seizinger was timed at 1:41.33.

The course was described by racers as fast — although Olympic champion Seizinger

said the new snow that had fallen overnight caused problems for her.

The weather was just about perfect for the race in which there were 64 starters. The temperature was just below zero and the sun was shining brightly.

After just two training runs

— cut down because of technical problems and the need to squeeze in an additional downhill race — Street started from 13th position, but it proved to be her lucky number.

Seizinger (starting from 14th position) and Lindh (16th) enjoyed basically the same snow conditions as Street.

Early favourite Heidi Zeller-Baehler of Switzerland chose to start from the 30th spot, gambling that the course would be faster. But the gamble failed with the course slowing down dramatically and she finished 15th.

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EU defines strategy for integrating eastern Europe

ESSEN, Germany (AFP) — The European Union's final summit as a 12-nation body closed here on Saturday with EU leaders setting out a strategy to open its doors to at least 10 former communist states in eastern Europe.

Heads of state and government from six of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia were present as their EU counterparts formally endorsed a commission strategy designed to help them prepare for membership through a combination of aid, opening of markets and advice on adapting legislation to comply with EU rules.

"It is an historic moment," said Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus. "I hope both parts of Europe take this as a message that the EU is ready to open its doors to the east."

Although the EU has pledged to support the eastern Europeans in preparing

for membership, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl warned it was up to them to meet the challenge of transforming their former command economies to make them compatible with the rules of the EU single market.

"It is important that we don't raise false expectations," Mr. Kohl said. "These countries have to carry most of the weight of moving closer to us on their own."

Mr. Klaus said his country, which is seen as a leading candidate for early membership, was ready for the challenge.

"We are ready to pay the costs and we hope to receive the benefits."

Asked if he thought EU membership was possible for the Czechs by the year 2000, he replied: "You mean that late?"

Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs said 2000 was an "ambitious but not

unrealistic target."

"Today was a breakthrough. Now it is up to us to make ourselves compatible with the EU."

The six states represented at Essen have all signed associating Europe agreements with the EU but the EU leaders made it clear they wanted to see four more countries drawn into the enlargement process.

The summit mandated the commission to negotiate Europe agreements with the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and, subject to the resolution of a dispute with Italy, the former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia.

As a first stage in the Essen strategy for eastern expansion, the summit called on the commission to draw up a detailed white paper laying out the steps the countries will have to take to adapt their former command economies to the rules of the EU's single market.



The heads of state and government pose for the family picture on the first day of the European Union Summit held at Essen on Dec. 9 and 10 (AFP photo)

Europeans chart long-term Euro-Mediterranean strategy

By Ayman Al Safadi in Essen

THE EUROPEAN Council Saturday adopted what president of the European Commission Jacques Delors called "a very difficult and very ambitious Mediterranean" policy that will have the long-term goal of creating a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.

Addressing a joint press conference with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the end of a two-day European summit, Mr. Delors stressed the importance of strengthening European-Mediterranean relations, noting that the interest of the continent in the Mediterranean was reflected in the fact that the EU was the largest donor to the Mideast peace process.

In reference to the limited visibility that the European role in the peace process has in comparison to the high profile of American involvement, the retiring commission president said: "Don't believe in appearances. We are the largest contributor."

Mr. Delors said that Europe was the "paymaster" of the Casablanca economic summit even though many perceived it as an American and Israeli organized event.

Similar emphasis on the European role in the Mediterranean was put by Mr. Kohl who stressed the interconnectedness between the stability and security of the two regions.

Mr. Kohl said the European Mediterranean strategy was an important item on the agenda of the summit, adding that Europe wanted to develop relations with the region to promote security, stability

and growth.

The summit has agreed to hold a Euro-Mediterranean conference in the second half of 1995 under the Spanish presidency with the purpose of exploring means of increasing cooperation between the two areas. But the meeting fell short of agreeing on any specific short term economic aid to the region.

In harmony with what sources said was a British position, the summit did commit specified amounts of aid at this point.

Figuring high on the agenda of the summit, which marks the end of the German presidency of the European Union (EU), is relations with Eastern and Central European countries which received a strong signal that they are welcome to eventually join the union.

Leaders of six such countries were hosted to lunch by the 12 leaders of the EU yesterday where they received the message that relations between their countries and Europe will be developed under a policy that will finally integrate them into the union as full fledged members (see story this page).

But Mr. Kohl was careful to emphasize at the press conference that a great deal of work is required before Eastern European countries were admitted into the union and that the "associated partners" would have to carry the major share of the burden in qualifying for entering the Western European club whose membership will increase from 12 to 15 next year when Finland, Sweden and Austria become official partners in the EU.

Mr. Kohl said that each

east and central European country will be judged on its own merit and that the EU's policy towards east and central Europe did not presuppose accession for countries that do not eventually meet the criteria.

In a statement that reflected the limitations of the EU's options in dealing with the conflict in Bosnia, the European leaders made the traditional call for an end of hostilities in the Balkans and stressed the importance of solving the conflict through dialogue.

The statement condemned the "violation of the safe area of Bihać by the Bosnian Serbs" and urged them to withdraw from the city.

The European leaders warned of the "severe" consequences for the civilian population in Bosnia if the United Nations Protection Force was forced to withdraw.

"UNPROFOR should continue its crucial mission of providing humanitarian assistance and saving human life," said the statement, urging Serbian forces to allow it freedom of movement so that it can fulfil its task.

The European leaders urged Serbian leaders to accept the peace plan prepared by the contact group for Bosnia as the basis for a settlement which provides a viable and reasonable solution for all parties.

The statement said that the territorial compromise could be adjusted later by mutual agreement between the parties, pointing out that constitutional arrangements that will preserve the integrity of Bosnia can be reached in the future.

Sources said that French President Francois Mitterrand defended the Euro-

pean position against lifting the arms embargo on Bosnian Muslims during the summit's discussion of the conflict there and heavily criticised calls to lift it made by the Republican leadership in the U.S. Congress.

The dominant issue on the agenda of the summit however was the economic situation in Europe and the unemployment problem from which most members of the union are suffering.

The summit adopted a white paper on economic growth presented by the European Commission and many observers here say the paper was adopted because it leaves it to the individual member states to implement its provisions.

"The main message going out of (Essen) is one of realistic optimism," Mr. Kohl told a press conference attended by hundreds of journalists.

At the end of 1994," he said, "there is no reason to lapse into Europessimism," pointing out what he called the significant positive developments in the last few years.

"We look to the future and the only way is to create the European house," said Mr. Kohl as he praised Mr. Delors who is expected to run for the French presidency when he retires from the top job at the EC "as the sole of this exercise."

Not many observers here however shared Mr. Kohl's optimism on the future of "the one European house" with Eurosceptics wondering what kind of Europe was the chancellor talking about with EU membership expected to expand beyond any possibility for a workable union.

Yemen says its forces clashed with Saudi troops

SANAA (AFP) — Saudi and Yemeni soldiers have clashed on their border leaving casualties on both sides, Yemeni military officials said, on Saturday, reporting that tension remained high in the area.

"Violent clashes Tuesday and Wednesday opposed Saudi and Yemeni units stationed on the joint border in the north of the province of Sada," in northwest Yemen, an official told AFP, asking not to be named.

Three Yemenis were wounded and there were "Saudi losses," he said without specifying.

The "fighting allowed

Sanaa's forces to recover the regions where the Saudis had put up observation posts and built roads."

Yemen accused its neighbour on Wednesday of putting up observation posts and building roads "deep into Yemeni territory in the provinces of Sada and Mahra," on its northwest and northeast border with Saudi Arabia.

But Riyadh denied the accusations saying the work had been carried out on Saudi soil and added it was ready to set up a joint inquiry commission "to shed light on the situation on the ground."

The two countries are in

dispute over the southern Saudi provinces of Najran, Jizan and Asir, which have been under Saudi control since the Taef accord of 1993, and adjoin Yemen's northern border.

An official close to Yemen's presidency said Sanaa "prefers the diplomatic option and is in contact with the Saudi authorities to defuse the tension at the border."

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal is due to meet his Yemeni counterpart Abdul Karim Al Iryani on the sidelines of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit preparatory meeting Saturday,

IAF calls for boycott of Israeli mission

AMMAN — On the eve of the official opening of the Israeli embassy in Amman the Islamic Action Front (IAF) Saturday urged Jordanians to boycott the embassy, to refrain from applying for visas from the mission and to boycott all its activities.

"We are sure that the Israeli embassy here will serve as a centre for hatching conspiracies on our culture, our mosques, our Koran, our schools, our morals and our national economy," the IAF said in a statement Saturday.

The statement urged Jordanians to unify ranks to "isolate this embassy so that it would find itself totally outcast within an environment that rejects its existence so that the enemy would realise that official normalisation of relations can by no means subjugate our people's will."

The statement recalled the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel saying it offered the best guide for Jordan because the Egyptian people "rejected the presence of the

Jews" and boycotted their embassy as alien with no place amongst the Arab population.

Describing the raising of the Israeli flag on the embassy in Amman Sunday as a black day, the statement said the event represented a departure from the nation's principled stands and a violation of the majority of the Jordanian people's will.

The statement praised the Palestinian intifada and said that Arabs and Muslims continue to hold on to their rights, "despite the Zionists' arrogance and the backing Israel gets from the United States and the Western nations."

Also Saturday, eight political parties including the IAF issued a separate statement expressing regret over a government ban on a march they planned, for Sunday from the Interior Ministry Circle to the Foreign Ministry.

The statement said that the

eight parties had been planning to organise the march in protest against the opening of the Israeli embassy, and a sit-in at the Foreign Ministry, when they received clear orders from the Amman governor banning the march.

The statement said the eight parties regretted the ban which they described as contrary to the rules of democracy, saying they preserve the right to deal with this issue with legal and democratic means.

The statement was signed by the following parties: The Jordan Baath Socialist Party, the IAF, the National Action Front, the Jordanian Socialist Democratic People's Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordanian Democratic Arab Party and the Jordanian Democratic Unionists Party.

Later on the day, a government source told the Jordan Times it was agreed that the parties would hold a vigil protest in front of the prime ministry on Sunday.

Intellectuals, politicians discuss Jordanian-Palestinian 'sensitivities'

By Nermeen Murad Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian politicians and intellectuals yesterday opened two days of discussions on their relationship and most speakers underlined the inevitability of political unity between Jordan and any independent Palestinian entity.

At the seminar on the future of the Jordanian-Palestinian relations, organised jointly by the World Affairs Council, the Jerusalem-based Arab Economists Association and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, speakers from both sides gingerly approached issues that many of them believe have hindered a "healthy" relationship between the Kingdom and the Palestinian leadership and people.

Despite the apparent consensus among most participants that a Jordanian-Palestinian unity was an inevitable outcome of the Middle East peace talks with Israel, both sides appeared determined on defining and resolving what at least one participant termed as "contentious perceptions" among the people from both sides before discussion of what the final formula for unity would look like.

Apart from the opening

speech by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, delivered on his behalf by Senator Kamel Abu Jaber (see page 1), other papers and discussions centred primarily on the reasons behind the tense relations between the Jordanian and Palestinian leaderships and the impact of that tension on the relationship between the two peoples.

Premier Majali, who at the outset of his speech said that he did not wish to lessen the importance of the past, said the two sides need "creative thinking that would assess the relationship from its positive side so that a much brighter and promising future can be built."

"I have come across those who think that Jordan's refusal to deal with the issue of a confederation is because of its refusal to accept an independent Palestinian entity. Such claims are false," Dr. Majali said.

"Why should we start by defining the frame of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation? There are many aspects of the relationship that make this end the best solution and we may agree to that."

But Dr. Majali added, "to my understanding, a confederation means a centralised leadership from both governments, flags and national anthem and

each party administers its own internal affairs. Until now, this simplified structure of a confederation lacks one of the basic elements. Palestinian sovereignty over their land, in order to complete the executive, legislative and judicial structures," he said.

On that, many of the participants agreed with Dr. Majali: It was too early to define the parameters of the future before a Palestinian entity was established.

But very few agreed to leave the past behind, for even although the title of the seminar was "the future of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship", many of the speeches in the morning session of the first day appeared to try to address the "past," giving rise to sensitivities from both sides.

The first paper, "cooperation on the political level," was a "candid" portrayal of "the Palestinian point of view." The paper was presented by Bir Zeit political science professor Ziad Abu Amr.

Dr. Abu Amr did not fail to bring out some sensitivities from the Jordanian participants over how the Kingdom's past role in the West Bank was viewed by the Palestinians.

"The Palestinian-Jordanian relationship has

been based on a foundation of mistrust and suspicion," Dr. Abu Amr told participants, citing several political developments that led the Palestinians to suspect the intentions of Jordan towards Palestinians.

"This suspicion has continued to permeate the thinking of all Palestinian political factions until this day," Dr. Abu Amr added.

This perception among the Palestinians of Jordan's role in what was termed by Dr. Abu Amr as "burying the Palestinian issue," increased "the fears of the regime in Jordan and consolidated its perception that the Palestinian national movement wanted to remove it."

"Therefore the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship continued to be contradictory," he said.

In his 8-page paper Dr. Abu Amr detailed several political developments in the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship as well as the relationship of each with Israel. He concluded that both sides have to reach an understanding and agree to their mutual concerns as well as address their mutual interests.

"Both sides have to realise that their strategic option lies primarily in establishing a strong relationship between them and both

have to be careful not to strategically calculate according to their independent agreements with Israel," Dr. Abu Amr warned.

"The idea behind this seminar is to focus on the positive elements between the two sides to establish a strong relationship that could not be affected by either leadership," Lower House member and member of the World Affairs Council Abdullah Ensour said.

Dr. Ensour was responding to Dr. Abu Amr's assessment that the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship was clouded by an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust.

In response to Dr. Abu Amr's paper, Dr. Ensour said that it appeared to forewarn of failure of any attempts to improve relations between the two sides by "stressing the past and describing that past as if it was only based on negative aspects."

Sharif Fawaz Sharaf, who also took Dr. Abu Amr to task over this point countered that "we cannot move forward if we continue to look back with suspicion, or harbour any feelings of mistrust."

Sharif Fawaz also took offence at Dr. Abu Amr's use of the "Hashemite regime" saying that it appeared to have "negative

connotations."

"Negative terminology like 'maintaining the Hashemite regime' will only make the suspicion and differences continue between the two sides," said Sharif Fawaz.

Dr. Abu Amr responded by saying that he did not intend to use these connotations in a negative way but that the past must be confronted with honesty in order to move forward to a better future relationship.

"This paper was intended to show the Palestinian peoples' point of view and this is the reality. These perceptions do exist. Do we want to deal with the reality and address it properly or are we looking to use descriptive words without substance?" he said.

Bashir Barghouti, head of the Palestinian People's Party, formerly the Communist Party, said that for years both Palestinian and Jordanian politicians have failed to respect the "idiosyncrasies of each party's politics."

"When we reach a situation where we recognise the idiosyncrasies of each side's politics we can move to the more general politics which could bring about unity," he said.

Ghassan Khatib, a former Palestinian negotiator and professor at Bir Zeit University, said that the

apparent sensitivities of the participants to the different views should be seen in a positive light.

"The seminar is an opportunity to start a public debate on the sensitivity of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship."

"There is a feeling of common interest on both sides that is not expressed on the official level. This could create public pressure on the leadership level," Mr. Khatib said.

"It could provide an agenda for official discussion when pinpointing the differences and potentials," Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Abu Amr told the Jordan Times that the Palestinian side in the seminar was keen on reaching a formula and understanding that would determine the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship.

"We both need each other in political, economic and social terms," Dr. Abu Amr said. "Societies on both sides have to play a positive role that could help in providing certain modalities to start a practical relationship."

Eleven working papers from each side would be presented at the seminar covering the Jordanian and Palestinian views on issues ranging from political, economic and legal relations to environmental issues.



Japan's crown princess marks 31st birthday

TOKYO (AP) — Palace watchers had thought Japan's Western-educated crown princess would bring a new, more open style to the conservative imperial household. But since retreating behind the palace walls last year after marrying the heir to the throne, Crown Princess Masako, who turned 31 Friday, has also stayed firmly behind the traditional royal veil. She celebrated her birthday Friday by sharing lunch with Crown Prince Naruhito, the palace said, after earlier denying requests for birthday interviews. Emperor Akihito and Prince Naruhito grant such pre-birthday audiences, but Princess Masako only released a statement through her royal handlers. "I would like to fully carry out all of my duties as the crown princess while helping the emperor and empress, together with the crown prince," it said. The multilingual, Oxford and Harvard-educated daughter of a high-ranking diplomat spent two years in the Foreign Ministry. After the palace announced her engagement to Prince Naruhito almost two years ago, the Japanese media was abuzz with speculation they might be the first truly accessible royal couple. But she has become the picture of the traditional, demure princess whose main duties are to bear children and follow her husband on official journeys. Princess Masako's performance in both of those tasks is a favourite topic in gossip television shows and weekly magazines, which have conducted a close, but as yet unfulfilled, watch for signs of pregnancy. To make matters worse for Princess Masako, Princess Kiko, the wife of the crown prince's younger brother, is expecting her second child in January. If that baby is a boy — and thus a potential heir — the pressure on Princess Masako will be intense.

Bachelor senator to wed opposition colleague's widow

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry, regarded as one of the U.S. Senate's most eligible bachelors, will marry the widow of a former Republican colleague, the Boston Globe newspaper reported Friday. Sen. Kerry, 50, is the state's junior senator and recognised for championing liberal causes at home and abroad. His wife-to-be, Teresa Heinz, 56, is the widow of Pennsylvania Republican and millionaire John Heinz who died in a 1991 plane crash. She was estimated to have inherited \$600 million when her husband died. Kerry is also from a wealthy background.

'Work is good for your migraine'

PARIS (AFP) — Work is probably the best way of preventing a migraine attack, according to research published Saturday in the British medical journal Lancet. Doctor Joseph Blau, of the British National Neurological and Neuro-Surgical Hospital in London, spoke to some 50 doctors for his research and concluded that "motivation, commitment to work and the correct use of medication" was the best means of combating migraine attacks. The doctors, aged 26 to 72, were asked about their migraines, their time off work and the treatment they took. They had all suffered migraines over periods ranging from five to 58 years but 36 of them had taken a combined total of just 42 days off work in a total period of 828 years of professional life. Some 16 of them had never had a day off while another 14 had taken several days off, amounting to 444 days off work in 276 years working life. According to Dr. Blau, a few of the doctors commented that work suppressed their migraines but that once they had reached home they took to bed. This led him to believe that it was professional motivation that stop the migraines from happening. "We should recall that the migraine General Ulysses Grant was suffering lifted dramatically when he received news of the surrender of the southern forces in the American Civil War," Dr. Blau added.

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